

TOP STORY: Roy Medvedev on Russia's No. 2 man

May 31-June 13, 1993

# In THESE TIMES

the alternative newsmagazine

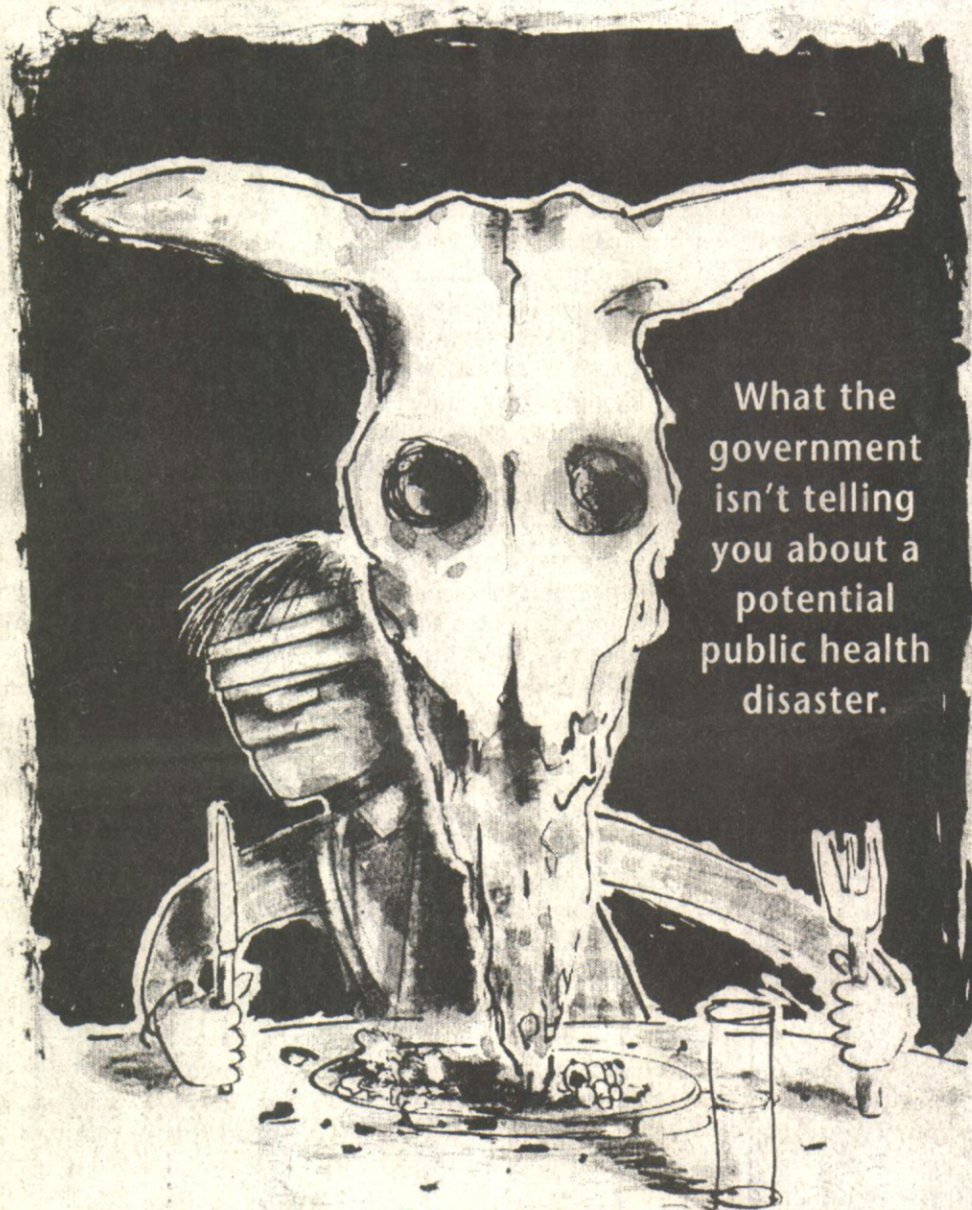
*"There is  
no greater  
power in the  
world than  
the zest  
of a post-  
menopausal  
woman."*

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## KILLER BEEF



What the  
government  
isn't telling  
you about a  
potential  
public health  
disaster.

Joel Bleifuss reports



# EDITORIAL

## THE HEALTH CARE BATTLE INTENSIFIES

**T**he done deal in health care that the pundits, politicians and corporate media crowded over a few short months ago is beginning to unravel. Sensing a sea change, the "realists" in Washington and in insurance company boardrooms are starting to worry. According to administration insiders, the health reform contest that was supposed to be waged between conservative and progressive versions of managed competition, either of which would strengthen insurance industry giants, is shifting toward a contest between managed competition and a Canadian-style health care system that would take private insurance companies out of the health care picture.

As long as the battle over health care remains in Washington, the protectors and beneficiaries of insurance industry largesse will be unbeatable. After all, corporate money controls Congress and its influence has been paramount among members of the Clinton team. But a loose coalition of health care workers in the United Health Care Action Network (UHCAN), Citizen Action, Neighbor-to-Neighbor (see *In These Times*, April 19)—along with a growing number of unions—is shifting the battle from Washington, D.C. to the grass roots. Coalition members have been advocating universal, affordable, high-quality care. And they understand that these goals are fiscally untenable unless the gross administrative inefficiencies and profit-driven policies of the private insurance system are eliminated.

Despite a virtual media blackout—the *New York Times*, for example, has refused to run an op-ed piece by Rep. Jim McDermott (D-WA), whose single-payer bill now has 73 House sponsors—the larger health reform movement has forced its attention on the Health Care Task Force chaired by Hillary Rodham Clinton. It seems clear that the bill the president sends to Congress will include many provisions taken from single-payer plans—uniform quality care, universal and portable coverage. More importantly, insiders are predicting that the Task Force will recommend that states be given the option of choosing between managed competition and single-payer.

This option is extremely important. It opens the door to

state legislative campaigns that may not seem as daunting as taking on Washington. Some are already beginning. For example, the Kentucky Health Care Coalition is already campaigning for a single-payer health care system in that state. A detailed comparison of the cost to Kentuckians for single-payer versus the present insurance system is being circulated. It shows that a single-payer system would save \$1.7 billion a year—in a state with only 1.4 percent of the nation's population—while providing universal care. And it has attracted the attention of some Kentucky legislators.

A similar campaign by the Pennsylvania state councils of the Communications Workers of America, the Service Employees International Union, the American Federation of

State County and Municipal Employees and other unions is underway. This activity has been quietly encouraged by a member of the National Health Care Campaign, which is funded by the Democratic National Committee and others for the purpose of creating popular support for Clinton's forthcoming proposal.

That's the good news. The bad news is that the task force has no intention of challenging the insurance industry. While the administration, along with the leadership of international unions like AFSCME, welcomes pressure from the left, the taxes and premiums they will propose will be much higher than under a single-payer plan.

It might seem suicidal for the administration to propose a managed-competition scheme that will greatly increase costs. But the administration is not looking beyond 1996, and the fiscal impact won't be apparent by then. Primarily concerned about re-election, Clinton wants the benefits to be in place in time for his next electoral campaign. By offering comprehensive quality coverage and simultaneously protecting the insurance industry, he hopes to gain the public's gratitude and still get big bucks from an insurance industry satisfied that its interests have been protected. Worry about the cost can come later.

But the fight over the nature of health care reform is not over. After the Task Force presents its proposal, there will be a year or more of intense debate, in Congress and in the country. The 73 single-payer supporters in the House are not numerous enough to carry the day, but they can force concessions from the managers of the administration's bill. And UHCAN, Citizen Action and Neighbor-to-Neighbor will work with labor and others to increase constituency pressure on House members not yet committed to single-payer legislation. We urge you to join the fray. ◀

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Cover illustration © Peter Hannan



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# LETTERS

## Impervious to history

In response to the letters written by a rabbi and myself (*ITT*, May 3), I detect that you and the rabbi have something in common: you are both blinded by the blood in your eyes.

I won't try to argue further with you about who is or isn't intransigent. You seem to be impervious to history or political and media reports. Let me just say that Israel is intransigent against Hamas, Habash and Arafat; the plight of the Palestinian people is an unfortunate consequence. Remove the former and you'll remedy the latter.

Before you commit yourself to trying to stop American aid to Israel, which I assume you know is an open invitation for Israel's destruction by the Arab countries, you should give at

least equal emphasis to American relations with such democracies as Egypt, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Jordan. You also should consider where you would advise Jewish refugees from Ethiopia, Russia—or other Jew-loving countries—to go.

Henry Perril  
Spring Valley, N.Y.

## History

Thank you very much for your excellent editorial, "Time to stop paying for Israeli apartheid" (*ITT*, April 5) and for printing letters by Henry Perril and Rabbi Samuel M. Silver and for your response to those letters (May 3).

Your understanding of the background to today's struggle prompted me to correct the number of Palestinians made refugees, which you gave as 300,000. The number is much closer

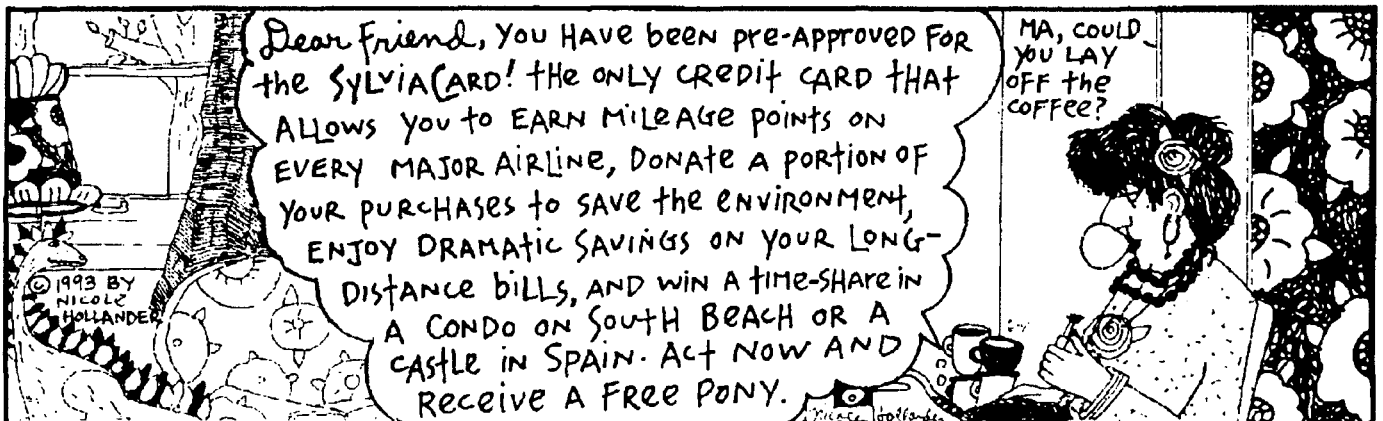
to 700,000. In his Information Paper No. 1, entitled "Facts and Figures about the Palestinians" (Center for Policy Analysis on Palestine, Washington, D.C.), Mohammad Hallaj cites Palestinian sources that give the number 770,100. The lowest estimate he cites is from the Israeli government, which gives 520,000 (revised to 590,000 in 1992). Benny Morris, the noted Israeli author of *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949* (1988) gives the figure of 600,000-760,000 in his *1948 and After* (1990).

As you say in your editorial, "The question now is how to end Israeli intransigence" and to recognize that Israel's oppression of the Palestinians and other non-Jewish peoples in the Middle East is supported by the U.S. As a way of confronting the question of forcing an end to Israeli intransigence we should recognize that the Rabin government has no intention of making any significant concession to the Palestinians but, on the contrary, is engaged in a stepped-up campaign to consolidate its hold on the land and water resources of the Occupied Territories.

In "Labor's Enclaves Policy in the Occupied Territories," in *Middle East International* (April 30), Israel Shahak writes that the resumption of costly Israeli highway plans after Rabin's return from the U.S. in March—roads that will isolate key Palestinian population centers from

SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander



each other—"can be seen as U.S. approval for the enclaves plan as a whole." The enclaves plan, Shahak writes, "implies deliberate and steady impoverishment of the Palestinians." Shahak also argues that Labor's goal of perpetuating the apartheid regime is "shared by the U.S., which otherwise could not support the Labor government so firmly."

In 1937 the League of Nations did *not*, as Henry Perril writes, present a plan for a Jewish/Arab binational state. Since Palestine was a British mandate, the League of Nations left it to Great Britain to deal with the Arab revolt of 1936-39. Perril might be thinking of the 1937 British government Peel Commission, which recommended partition, not a binational state (see *Before Their Diaspora* [1984] by Walid Khalidi, p. 189).

Everybody knows that in 1947 the U.N. did *not*, once again, propose a binational state, as Perril writes, but rather partition into two states. The Palestinians rejected it because under the plan the Jews were to get more than 50 percent of the land, while they owned less than 7 percent in 1947 (see Khalidi, p. 305). It is less well known that, as Simha Flapan points out in *The Birth of Israel: Myths and Realities* (1987), Jewish acceptance of the U.N. Partition Resolution was a tactical decision since they wanted even larger borders than the U.N. allotted to them. Nor were the Zionists comfortable with the prospect of a large Arab minority within their borders, as called for in the U.N. plan. In the end, the Jews expelled all but 120,000 Arabs from their 1948-49 borders.

As a member of the International Jewish Peace Union, a group that struggles for Palestinian national rights and believes in peace with justice for all peoples in the Middle East, I very much appreciated your excellent rebuttal of Rabbi Silver's one-sided tirade. I would only take exception to your remark that "the Palestinians did everything they could to destroy Israel."

There could be no question in the minds of the Palestinians or anyone

else at that time of destroying Israel. As Flapan puts it, the "terrifying declarations" from the Arab leadership about driving the Jews to the sea were merely "a cover ... as Zionist policy-makers knew at the time ... for the absence of any serious planning and preparation for the war" by the Arab forces (p. 122). The struggles of the Palestinians and the intervention of the Arab armies on May 15 were mainly attempts to stem further losses of land and peoples if they could. Unfortunately, they were unsuccessful.

Ronald Bleier  
New York

## Translations

If, as Salim Muwakkil writes (*ITT*, May 3), Benjamin Chavis "translated the New Testament from English to Greek," will he now, as executive director of the NAACP, translate the Koran into Arabic, the Upanishads into Sanskrit and the Hebrew Bible into Hebrew?

Steven G. Kellman  
San Antonio, Texas

## Lift the embargo

Diana Johnstone's arguments in favor of not lifting the arms embargo in Bosnia (*ITT*, May 3) are somewhat disingenuous. She frames her objections by using Joanne Landy and Thomas Harrison's *War Report* article to confuse the issue. First, she implies that lifting the arms embargo to give "the Bosnians a chance to win" would be meaningless because there are "no linguistic or racial differences between the Serbs and Muslims."

Most people already know that they are the same people. The problem is that the Serbs (whether in Bosnia, Serbia or Croatia) don't go along with this definition. They have defined the Bosnian Muslims as "the other" and have been waging a campaign of genocidal warfare against them in order to appropriate land and create a Greater Serbia.

Johnstone maintains that Landy

and Harrison have defined the Bosnians they want to help as "all the people of Bosnia who reject division into ethnic ghettos." She then states that the arms would only strengthen the "Muslim militia," as she characterizes the men protecting their families from rape and slaughter. Most people recognize that when one speaks of aiding the "Bosnians," one is not primarily talking about "people who reject ethnic ghettos" but the Bosnian Muslims who have lost between 134,000 and 200,000 people in the past year due to Serbian aggression.

Johnstone implies that the embargo should remain because "there is plenty of weaponry already in Bosnia, which was the arsenal of the former Yugoslavia." The problem with this is that the weaponry is mostly in the hands of the Bosnian Serbs, not the Muslims. In addition, more arms and strategic help have been given to the Bosnian Serbs by the Serbian government (and to the Croats by Croatia). The Bosnian Muslims are hopelessly outgunned and dying even as I write this letter.

Finally, Johnstone states that lifting the embargo would "escalate the war"—Europe's old excuse for standing by and letting the killing of the Muslims continue unabated. Her suggestion of protected enclaves (somewhat like cattle compounds), filled with people dependent on foreign countries to allow them to exist, is not the answer either.

We are not, as Johnstone suggests, "all Serbo-Croats." This definition erases the Bosnian Muslims from history, as the Serbs would like to do. Croats and Serbians, no matter what country they live in, can always look to Serbia and Croatia for protection and identification. The Bosnian Muslims have nowhere but Bosnia to live in or identify with. If the West does not want to aid them militarily with ground troops or air strikes, then I say lift the arms embargo before discussion of this subject becomes absolutely moot.

Carol Jevrem  
Columbus, Ohio



# InSHORT



AIDS activists from New York at the Lesbian, Gay and Bi March

## THE 1 PERCENT SOLUTION

*Anti-gay forces look for safety in low numbers*

A new study, the release announced, had found that only 1 percent of the adult male population in this country is gay. The press release (not the study itself) quickly became fodder for anti-gay and religious right forces hoping to take the wind out of the march's sails.

The study, entitled the "1991 National Survey of Men," was published in the March/April 1993 issue of *Family Planning Perspectives*. Conducted by researchers from the Battelle Human Affairs Research Center in Seattle, the study surveyed 4,751 men concerning patterns of sexual behavior.

As organizers and activists across the country prepared for the Lesbian, Gay and Bi March on Washington last month, a four-page press release from a research group began appearing over fax lines in newsrooms across the country. A



By Woody Igou

## Commereality

Paramount is producing a one-hour TV series called *Viper* for release this fall. As the apogee of product placement, the series stars a Dodge Viper sports car.



Plans also call for tie-in products, including clothing and model cars.

*Arsenio in five years: "A great show, lots of stars. We have Advil, Tupperware is here, and the Budman is fresh from the Betty Ford Clinic."*

## No work slowdowns!

Newspapers in Bangkok, Thailand, report that 30 elephants being used in the teak forest have become



addicted to amphetamines. The elephants' handlers fed them "speed" to get more work out of them. Some of them have been placed in elephant rehabilitation centers.

*So many trees, so little time.*



**Sally, take this letter ... to hell**  
Inco, Ltd., a

Canadian mining company, has informed 58 female secretaries, many over 40 years old, that within three weeks they must decide whether to be laid off or to report to training classes in mining. An official stated, "Mining is not as physically demanding as it once was."

*And canary-yellow dresses will be standard issue.*

## Cough up those dividends

The Harrisburg, Pa., Patriot News reported that Pennsyl-



vania Blue Shield, the state's largest health insurer, has purchased

almost \$10 million worth of Philip Morris, Inc., stock in the last three years.

*So will Social Security now bankroll Kevorkian, Inc.?*

## The stuff of dreams

Tourists on sex junkets to Thailand are being rendered



unconscious and robbed by transvestites with tranquilizer-laced breasts, according to

Bangkok police. One transvestite stated, "Many of our customers did not drink, so we would get them to suck our drug-laced nipples."

*Symbiotic perversity.*

## APPALL-O-METER SCALE

1. Weightless banality
2. Green Acres stupid
3. Malicious cretinism
4. Howard Sternesque
5. Mary Matalin mean
6. Gangrenous venality
7. A touch of evil
8. A cancer in the Zeitgeist
9. Et tu, Pol Pot?
10. Horseperson of the Apocalypse

Participants were asked, among a host of other questions, if they engaged "exclusively" in same-sex activity, to which only 1 percent replied in the affirmative.

If that figure is correct, there are some 2.6 million gay men in the United States. They certainly seem to get around: CNN estimates that 1.7 million people showed up in Washington for the gay-rights march. (Organizers estimate that at least 1 million people participated; the "official" park police count of 300,000 includes only the number of people in the Capitol Mall—not the entire parade route—at any given time.)

Now, in the wake of the March's success, anti-gay forces are using the study in an effort to convince Congress that the gay population isn't actually as large and powerful as it claims. The argument, it seems, is that there aren't enough gay men to constitute a minority deserving equal rights and treatment.

"[The study] made it easier for us. We're on a more even playing field," Kelly Mullins, director of media relations for the D.C.-based Traditional Values Coalition, told *In These Times*. "Before, we had to fight this myth that there's 10 percent [gays in the total population]."

Previous studies have varied greatly in counting the gay population. The landmark Kinsey study in 1948 came up with the commonly cited 10 percent figure; other studies, asking about behavior, desire and self-definition have found that as many as 80 percent of Americans report some level of homosexual inclination. The Battelle study is not the first to find less than 10 percent, but its findings have been wildly misinterpreted, and its methodology has received considerable criticism.

The surveys were conducted door to door, largely by female interviewers. Thirty percent of those polled refused to participate, and those that did were asked for their name, Social Security number and employer before being asked to reveal intimate details about their sexual behavior. The 1 percent "exclusively homosexual" figure also effectively rules out bisexual men as well as men who were involved with women before coming out.

Clearly, some men are going to be inclined to withhold some aspects of their sexuality from a strange woman who has just asked for his employer's name. But the questionable methodology has not been referred to in many of the media reports, nor the consideration of the anti-gay groups who have latched onto the report. "I don't know about their methodology, but I don't hear anyone calling any part of this study into question," said the Values Coalition's Mullins.

Hidden within the answers to other questions are some more telling, if convoluted, numbers: 3 percent reported performing or receiving oral sex with another man; of the 20 percent who reported engaging in anal sex, one-fourth (or 5 percent of the total sample) reported male partners; slightly more than 2 percent reported "any same-gender activity."

In the commentary to the study, researchers admit that "some respondents may underreport their sexual behavior ... because of embarrassment or social unacceptability." The study was not, in fact, even designed to count gay men. "[Media reports are] missing the point," Korsy Taufer, one of the senior researchers for the study, told the *Washington Blade*. "[The study] was specifically done to look at risky behavior among heterosexuals. If we wanted to count gays, we would have done a totally different study," she said. One that probably would have been closer to the commonly accepted 10 percent mark—and one that probably would have received a lot less media attention.

—Kurt Gottschalk

## SANCTIMONIOUS SANCTIONS

*Washington's embargo of Cuba  
is hurting the U.S. economy*

mechanisms, is now reeling from the withdrawal of Soviet aid. The Cuban people face rationing of almost every basic commodity.

But what about the embargo's costs to the United States? It's a question President Clinton—who endorsed toughening of economic sanctions against Cuba during the campaign—doesn't like to address. Nonetheless, one of the simplest and most effective ways for Clinton to stimulate the U.S. economy would be to end the embargo.

It's difficult to calculate the cost of military and intelligence efforts to keep Cuba in check, but we do know a little about the bills for propaganda. Two years of TV Marti, which few in Cuba see because of effective jamming, cost \$47 million.

Lost markets cost much more. American farmers could sell Cuba cotton, wheat, rice and other foods in short supply. And Cuba needs all kinds of industrial equipment and parts. While the Cuban tourist buses are modern imports from Sweden and Japan, the overloaded and undermaintained fleet of buses from Hungary and Czechoslovakia that carries most of the day-to-day traffic needs replacement. (During a recent visit, I grabbed hold of the ceiling bar of a public bus and the bolts pulled out.)

Floundering U.S. auto and oil industries might also find markets. Cars are scarce; there are some Soviet Ladas and occasionally one encounters an American car with tail fins from the '50s or '60s, kept running through mechanical ingenuity and the black market. The drastic cutback of oil imports leaves the refineries, now Cuban, underutilized and the roads almost empty. (Four years ago, Havana's harbor was filled with Russian tankers and freighters; a year ago I spotted none, although the heavy oil slick on the water and shore remains.)

When I remarked on the high visibility of the shiny new bicycles—the government says it has purchased 1 million—Cuban friends thought I was saying “Chiny,” the bikes from China that bear the brand name “Forever,” despite unreliable brakes, tire valves and excessive weight. Could American bicycle manufacturers still be competitive, if given the opportunity?

Cuba needs investment capital for rebuilding utilities and the telephone system. French companies are exploring offshore for oil, although prospects are moderate. Meanwhile, many U.S.-based rigs remain idle. A high priority is placed on tourism as a source for hard currency, and at present Spanish, German and Latin American interests have the inside track on creating handsome beach resorts at Varadero and other sites.

A 1992 Johns Hopkins University study, *New Opportunities for U.S.-Cuban Trade*, concludes that while Cuba's total trade of \$13 billion in 1988 dropped shortly after Soviet disengagement, hard currency imports from the West have risen to \$4 billion. The authors suggest that if the embargo were lifted, U.S. firms could sell grain, fertilizer, pesticide, natural and synthetic fibers, medical supplies and other goods to the tune of \$1.3 to \$2 billion in the first year. This total could quickly expand. The study also sees economic gains to the United States if imports of nickel, sugar, citrus fruits, seafood, rum,

There's no question the 30-year U.S. embargo against the Castro government costs Cuba dearly. The Caribbean nation's economy, denied access to its closest market for goods, capital and tourists, and stunted by Soviet-style planning

## MEDIA BEAT

By Pat Aufderheide

### Some things considered

Devotees of *Morning Edition* and *All Things Considered* may find the results of a just-released study by Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR) disturbing: National Public Radio (NPR) offerings differ less than you might think from mainstream news reporting. Over a four-month period in late 1991, 96 percent of its regular commentators were white; only 18 percent were women and they typically did not address comment on political or economic issues. News tended to be official-heavy and government press release-fed. NPR featured the Eastern corridor domestically and Europe internationally. But this cautious approach is not necessarily typical of public radio. Music and kid's programs (most of it non-NPR) and local news and talk shows all diversify public radio, and some community stations cater to local voices that go unheard elsewhere. David Horowitz, the born-again conservative who has crusaded against “the liberal bias” in public broadcasting, has no patience with the FAIR critique and downright outrage at many non-NPR aspects of public radio. The latest issue of his magazine *Comint* argues that the FAIR study slights the fact that many of the white men in question were “liberal.” At the May Public Radio Conference in Washington, D.C.—where he was seen slipping lines to Sen. Bob “Liberal Bias”



**Dole (R-KS)**—Horowitz accused public radio of being staffed with '60s leftovers who wouldn't give airtime to right-to-lifers, or to his own show, which is produced at Santa Monica's public radio station, KCRW.

He also championed the role of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) as public radio censor. Last year, Dole and others slipped an amendment into the CPB's funding saying that it had to monitor "objectivity and balance." In response, the CPB is now proposing to set up an 800-number complaint line and to allocate funds for programs that would "balance" shows deemed non-objective. Not only would such reforms squander \$1 million, but they would also encourage dull programming.

Horowitz believes that the CPB's monitoring will make it easier for him and his erstwhile allies to air their views. He has found a ready scandal in the blatantly anti-Semitic programming on KPFF, the Los Angeles station in the Pacifica network. The CPB ought, he and CPB board member Vic Gold say, to cut funding to both KPFF and similar offending stations. Since such a step would violate the CPB's founding mandate and possibly the First Amendment, the CPB board has so far resisted. Being saddled with censorship responsibilities would only foment such intra-bureaucratic wrangles, without encouraging what public radio needs most in such a case: open, multisided discussion that boldly confronts bigotry.

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tobacco and pharmaceutical products were allowed.

To encourage capital investment, the Cuban government is authorizing all kinds of joint ventures. But the balance sheet of the relationship is more than monetary. We might learn valuable lessons from exchanges with Cuba's much admired community-health and child-care services, as well as its educational programs. Cuba's pioneering research in biotechnology and serious if belated efforts to develop renewable energy should be shared.

The embargo against Cuba may please some militant right-wing exiles in Florida who helped get Bill Clinton elected. But it certainly isn't in the best interests of American working people—or their Cuban counterparts.

—Robert Engler

## A SMOKESCREEN?

*Clinton acts cautiously on hazardous-waste incineration*

Bill Clinton came into office promising to shut down a controversial Ohio hazardous-waste incinerator and to support a long-term incinerator moratorium. But, as David Moberg reported in the *In*

*These Times*' May 3 cover story, the administration has been slow to act on those pledges.

On May 18, however, the Environmental Protection Agency finally announced a series of new restrictions on hazardous-waste incinerators, which recent research indicates are even more dangerous than previously thought.

But environmentalists are not satisfied—in part, because the EPA's new measure will not halt a test burn at the Waste Technologies Industries incinerator in East Liverpool, Ohio. The incinerator has been the focus of an intense campaign by Greenpeace. "The right response would be a ban on new incinerators and a phase-out of existing burners," says Joe Thornton of Greenpeace. "EPA's actions don't match its words."

—Miles Harvey

## ROUGH CUTS

By JA Reid

### An Academic Stakes Out His Turf



# I N P E R S O N



## FRAME BY FRAME

*Debra Chasnoff has scripts for political change*

Debra Chasnoff says she's willing to rent out the Oscar she won for *Deadly Deception*, the best short documentary of 1991. She plans to call it "Oscar therapy."

"It's a luxury unusual for a leftist lesbian," she explains. "I got support and validation from everyone—friends, strangers, cousins I hadn't heard from in years, even the UPS man."

Chasnoff made *Deadly Deception* for INFACT, the Boston-based corporate accountability group, to use in its campaign against General Electric. With the assistance of Chasnoff's award-winning film, INFACT's seven-year boycott of GE consumer and health care products did realize its goal—to pressure the corporate giant to divest its nuclear weapons division. Not that the film was greeted with universal acclaim. WTTW, Chicago's PBS affiliate, still refuses to screen *Deadly Deception*.

From INFACT's voluminous research files, Chasnoff chose the most chilling stories of workers and others whom GE knowingly exposed to radiation and other toxic wastes in and around the company's nuclear weapons plants over several decades. Looking for a personal hook, Chasnoff intercut these grim tales of human devastation with fragments from the GE ad campaign, "We Bring Good Things to Light." Says Chasnoff, ever the propagandist, "I wanted to make it so no one who saw [this film] could ever again watch those ads without cringing in disgust."

The film shows an ordinary looking, middle-aged man who grew up on a farm downwind of the nuclear weapons plant at Hanford, Wash. Sitting behind the wheel of his truck, he drives down "Death Mile," his monotone voice reciting the harrowing tragedies that have befallen 27 out of 28 households—birth defects, cancer, suicides.

"The individuals in this film are heroes to me," Chasnoff says. "They are people whose lives were decimated but who managed to turn their anger

## ETC.

By Miles Harvey

### Why spy?

Was a leading civil rights group spying on *In These Times* and hundreds of other progressive organizations? And if so, why? These are just two of many disturbing questions about secret intelligence files amassed by a paid operative for the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) of B'nai B'rith. The scandal is as bizarre as it is complex. Prosecutors in San Francisco last month released nearly 700 pages of documents linking the ADL with paid spy Roy Bullock and Tom Gerard, a former San Francisco police intelligence officer and CIA operative in Latin America. The documents show that Bullock—who for 30 years worked as one of the ADL's paid informants—compiled computer files on nearly 10,000 individuals and hundreds of groups, including *In These Times*. Bullock shared his files with police officer Gerard. And Gerard allegedly supplied Bullock and the ADL with classified police information.

But police say that the Bullock and Gerard files also contained confidential information from other law enforcement agencies around the country. This has prompted allegations that the ADL, in conjunction with a network of law enforcement officials, was running a covert nationwide intelligence-gathering system.

The two men also allegedly sold information from their files to the South African government—and may have cooperated with Israel as well. Earlier this month, Gerard pleaded not guilty to four violations of California law regarding the theft of government documents and to one



count of conspiracy. As *In These Times* went to press, neither Bullock nor the ADL had been charged. Both deny any wrongdoing.

The two men used databases divided into five categories: "Arab," "pinko," "right," "skins" (referring to neo-Nazi skinheads) and "ANC" (the African National Congress). *In These Times* was relegated to the "pinko" section of both the Gerard and Bullock databases.

The nature of the *In These Times* files remains a mystery because the San Francisco Police Department has not yet made them available. The dossiers may turn out to be simply collections of *In These Times* articles. The ADL admits to keeping files on a wide variety of organizations. But in a press release, the group insisted that "the vast majority of ADL's files are composed of news clips, magazine articles, books, journals and other documents." It's worth noting, however, that prosecutors contend the ADL had no less than three covert agents gathering information in Chicago, where *In These Times* is based. The fact that Bullock was being paid by the ADL is not proof that his files were in the group's possession or that it violated the law. But the group's involvement with Bullock and other paid spies does demonstrate that something has gone terribly wrong at the ADL, which was founded 80 years ago to strengthen inter-religious understanding and cooperation, to improve relations between the races and to battle anti-Semitism. The ADL championed civil rights in the '60s. But 30 years later, the NAACP and Rainbow Coalition were among the groups targeted by Bullock and Gerard.

into activism."

Chasnoff's Oscar acceptance speech in the spring of 1992 made news. Her thanks to her collaborator and lover, Kim Klausner, was hailed as a prime-time "coming out." And as she left the podium, she raised her fist and cried, "Boycott GE!"

Asked why she has chosen to make political movies, she answers, "All movies are political, every frame. But it's not just movies that are political—it's everything you do. Every choice you make."

After a suburban girlhood, Chasnoff spent four years at Wellesley College, where she majored in economics, hoping in vain to understand the profound social and economic disparities she saw around her. After college, not quite sure what to do next, she traveled to Central America, where she got a first-hand education about how corporate America wreaks havoc in the Third World. From there, she spent a short, schizophrenic stint earning a living as a rate analyst and devoting her off hours to the Clam Shell Alliance. She quit her day job and vowed never again to live her politics at night and work for the "enemy" during the day.

Then someone suggested she make a movie about lesbian mothers, a phrase once considered an oxymoron. According to Chasnoff, the media response to the resulting film, *Choosing Children*, had more effect than the film itself in initiating a revolution in consciousness and helping "jump-start a lesbian baby boom." Now, 10 years later, gay people no longer assume they must forego parenthood.

In one infamous scene from *Choosing Children*, a clean-cut young woman smiles as she explains do-it-yourself artificial insemination as if it were a cooking lesson. She holds up an artichoke jar—the best kind to use—and demonstrates how she puts the jar in a sock and then places it between her legs to keep it warm as she delivers it to a hopeful mother-to-be. The process is demystified, but the endeavor is not diminished.

Chasnoff took part in that revolution four and a half years ago when she bore her own son, Noah—"the best-researched child in America." Family life is clearly paramount to Chasnoff. She's thrilled to have a son. "Being a lesbian, it's a great opportunity to experience life through the eyes of the opposite gender," she says.

A curious vein of self-examination runs through Chasnoff's conversation. Even in the polished speech she gives at screenings of *Deadly Deception* she acknowledges her considerable achievement while, at the same time, frequently referring to "doubting voices." She'd like to try her hand at a feature film and is currently involved in negotiations to option a true-life story of a lesbian activist.

Recently, after giving a long, animated speech at a screening of *Deadly Deception* at Northwestern University, Chasnoff sat for an hour on the stage, exhausted but patient and willing to listen as student after student eagerly approached, bright-eyed, to thank her for the inspiration and to tell her about their own plans.

Chasnoff concedes that the audiences who attend her films and lectures are largely people who already agree with her. "I don't discount the value of preaching to the converted," she says. "I believe that the left, as a minority, has the ability to effect changes far beyond our numbers."

Political work, however, is an unglamorous and thankless business. People have a need to be re-motivated and re-energized. And that's where she comes in. "It's all political," she says again. "Every frame." —Susan Kimmelman

# T H E F I R S T S T O N E

## KILLER BEEF

By Joel Bleifuss

**T**he British public has changed its meat-eating habits, fearful that mad cow disease—a deadly nervous system infection that is epidemic in U.K. cattle—can be transmitted to humans. Surveys show that beef consumption in Britain has fallen recently by about 25 percent. And more than 2,000 public schools there have stopped serving beef to children.

Mad cow disease, scientifically known as bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), is a form of transmissible spongiform encephalopathy, a degenerative disease of the brain caused by a virus-like agent. The disease, which is found in mammals, has no known cure, is always fatal, can be contracted by eating an infected animal and is caused by an infectious agent that resists normal sterilization methods. It is thought that British cows contracted BSE from eating protein feed made from rendered sheep, some of which were infected with scrapie, the sheep and goat form of transmissible spongiform encephalopathy.

Officials in London have tried to quell public anxiety by denying that BSE poses a threat to public health, but the British aren't buying it. Surveys show that only 2 percent believe what their government tells them about the food they eat. And in the case of BSE, much of what the British government has asserted in the past has turned out to be wrong.

Unfortunately, a similar tale of bureaucratic stonewalling is being played out in the United States. The official government position is that BSE has not infected American cattle, but some scientists who have studied the disease believe otherwise.

Mad cow disease was recognized in 1985. In November 1986, the British government's Central Veterinary Laboratory identified BSE as a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy. However, British government ministers were not informed about the disease and its implications until June 1987.

Cattle deaths continued to mount. So in April 1988 the government set up a working group on BSE, known as the Southwood Commission. The commission turned in its report two months later and recommended that feeding ruminant animals to other ruminants be banned. The government promptly banned this practice and seven months later publicly released the Southwood Commission report, which stated: "From present evidence it is likely that cattle will prove to be a 'dead-end host' for the disease agent and most unlikely that BSE will have any implications for human health. Nevertheless, if our assessments of these likelihoods are incorrect, the implications would be extremely serious."

It turned out that the commission's assessments were incorrect: BSE can infect other mammals.

In June 1989, virologists and other experts conducted a second official investigation and recommended that the sale of certain organ meats, including brains, be banned in Britain. The government enacted the ban immediately and then waited six months to publicly release the committee's findings, called the Tyrell Report. Public concern mounted in the wake of British newspaper reports about pet cats and zoo animals that had contracted transmissible spongiform encephalopathies from eating infected cattle products.

Some British cattle that were carrying the disease but had yet to develop the mad cow symptoms were undoubtedly slaughtered and eaten by humans. Whether the people who ate that infected beef are at risk will not be known for a long time. The human form of BSE can incubate in an infected person for up to 30 years. Tyrell Committee member R.G. Will, an Edinburgh doctor, wrote in the June 16, 1990, issue of *The New Scientist*, "It may be 10 to 15 years before it can be determined with any certainty that BSE does not represent a risk to the human population." And Committee Chair David Tyrell underlined that point three days later, when he said, "If you want to be absolutely sure, you should not eat beef and you should not eat products containing beef protein."

To this day, however, British officials continue to assert that the beef supply is fit for human consumption. In March a spokesman for the Health Ministry announced, "Beef can be eaten safely by everyone." And the Agriculture Ministry asserted that the BSE epidemic is under control. The numbers, however, suggest otherwise. At present, 885 cows die each week from the disease, up from 675 cows per week a year ago.

This latest PR palliative was prompted by the official announcement that a 61-year-old farmer whose dairy herd had been infected with BSE had died from Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD), a human form of transmissible spongi-



form encephalopathy. The official announcement was made by the head of the Health Ministry's CJD surveillance unit, a body set up in April 1990 to monitor CJD cases in Britain. Although the farmer's name, address and date of death were not released, it is known that he became concerned when he developed symptoms similar to those of his mad cows—unsteadiness and difficulty controlling movements.

CJD is thought to occur naturally at a rate of one to two cases per one million people. But the disease is more prevalent in certain populations. A CJD-like disease plagued a tribe of New Guinea cannibals up until the '50s, when the eating of human flesh was outlawed.

A high incidence of CJD is also found in British dwarfs. Between 1959 and 1985 many of them were treated with a growth hormone made from human pituitary glands. Some batches of this growth hormone were contaminated with the CJD virus-like agent. Each dwarf who took these hormones currently runs a one in 200 chance of developing CJD. Because of the long incubation period of CJD, the full extent of infection in this population will not be known for many years.

Further, clusters of CJD cases have been found in Libyan Jews and in two regions of Slovakia. The affected people had two things in common: contact with scrapie-infected sheep and an apparent genetic predisposition to CJD infection.

Some medical experts believe that the incidence of CJD in the human population is much higher than one in a million. A 1989 study at the University of Pittsburgh sought to test the accuracy of a clinical diagnosis of dementia. The study examined the case histories of 54 demented patients who, upon their death, had been consecutively autopsied at the University of Pittsburgh. The study discovered that 39, or 72.1 percent, of the patients had Alzheimer's disease; three, or 5.5 percent, had CJD; and 15, or 27.7 percent, had other central nervous system disorders. From their study, the researchers concluded that "in patients with a clinical diagnosis of dementia, the etiology [cause of the dementia] cannot be accurately predicted during life." Further, they said that the three cases of CJD that turned up in their study "had a much longer course than is usually seen with that condition and failed [when the patient was alive] to show the usual EEG abnormalities." In other words, the CJD cases discovered in Pittsburgh exhibited symptoms that were more compatible with Alzheimer's disease than a classic case of CJD.



BSE cattle being incinerated in Devon, England.

The Pittsburgh study points to two possibilities. Either the researchers hit a cluster of Pennsylvania-based CJD, which would be the first such cluster found in the United States. Or their findings could indicate that some of the 4 million people in the United States suffering from Alzheimer's may actually be infected with the agent that causes CJD. And that raises this question: has an unrecognized form of BSE infected U.S. cattle and entered the human food chain?

The official government position is that BSE has never been found in the United States. True, there is no proof that any cattle are infected with BSE, but, as I discussed in my last column ("The First Stone," May 17), scientific research indicates that an unrecognized form of BSE has infected the American cattle population. U.S. cows that are inoculated in a laboratory with scrapie-infected sheep brain don't go mad like their British bovine cousins. They simply fall down and die. Such symptoms are similar to those of downer cow syndrome, a condition whereby a cow falls down and is unable to get up. Cows go down for a variety of reasons—some easily explainable, others not. All cows that go down, however, either get sent to the slaughterhouse, where they are readied for human consumption, or to the rendering plant, where they end up as high-protein animal feed.

Some veterinary scientists who are studying BSE and downer cow disease fear that a form of BSE is infecting U.S. cattle, that it manifests itself as downer cow syndrome, and that the current method of disposing of cattle carcasses by

rendering them and feeding them back to cows is spreading the disease. Yet officials at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have refused to ban this practice of feeding cows to cows. According to government documents released through a Freedom of Information Act request by the Washington, D.C.-based Foundation on Economic Trends, the federal agencies responsible for protecting animal and human health are apparently ignoring any evidence that suggests that U.S. cattle are infected with BSE.

The possibility that some cows suffering from downer cow syndrome may actually be infected with BSE was first raised by Richard Marsh, a veterinary scientist at the University of Wisconsin. In the fall of 1985, before BSE was discovered in British cattle, Marsh reported at the annual meeting of the U.S. Animal Health Association on his research into an outbreak of transmissible mink encephalopathy on a Wisconsin mink farm where the mink were fed downer cows. He suggested that circumstantial evidence indicated that a scrapie-like disease in cattle was going undiagnosed.

Subsequent research by Marsh and others has demonstrated that when U.S. cattle are inoculated with brain matter from scrapie-infected U.S. sheep or from infected mink, they develop BSE. However, these BSE-infected cattle develop symptoms and brain damage that differs from those found in British cows.

Officials in the Agriculture Department are well aware of Marsh's work. As a member of the USDA's Scrapie/BSE Consultants Group, he has presented the results of his research at the group's regular meetings. In fact, an unsigned June 1990 memo sent by the USDA to the National Veterinary Services Lab in Ames, Iowa, acknowledges Marsh's concerns that downer cows should be examined more carefully. The memo said, "The report by Richard Marsh and [his research partner] G.R. Hartsough of a new incidence of transmissible mink encephalopathy at a Wisconsin mink ranch, feeding mostly on downer or dead dairy cattle, suggests that these animals should be included in the survey. We do not believe that the survey should concentrate on these animals but propose to sample 25-30 [downer cows.]" Last week, when asked about this memo, Marsh said that any study that examines only 25-30 cases of downer cow syndrome would be statistically insignificant.

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By deciding, in effect, to ignore Marsh's studies, policy-makers at the USDA and FDA have apparently decided that the type of BSE that appeared in Britain was the only form of the disease to be concerned about. In March 1992, G.A. Mitchell, director of the Office of Surveillance and Compliance at the FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine, wrote that the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has "performed a qualitative and quantitative risk assessment of BSE in this country and concluded that the possibility of BSE appearing in U.S. cattle is extremely low." Mitchell was referring to a January 1991 APHIS study titled "Quantitative Analysis of BSE Risk Factors." That risk assessment was based on the assumption that "scrapie-infected sheep were the only source of the BSE agent." In other words, the APHIS "quantitative analysis" did not consider the possibility that BSE could be spread by giving cattle feed made from rendered cattle that are infected with an as-yet-unrecognized form of BSE.

In June 1992, the Scrapie/BSE Consultants Group met in Ames to report on research in progress. At this meeting Marsh reiterated his concerns and presented further evidence that an unrecognized form of BSE that does not manifest itself as mad cow disease may already be infecting U.S. cattle. The group, however, chose not to alter its research program, which, among other things, was examining the brains of rabies-negative cattle in an effort to find a BSE-infected mad cow. The official minutes of this meeting state: "The consultant group and participants [including representatives from the National Milk Producers Federation, National Renderers Association, the American Sheep Industry Association and the National Cattleman's Association] agreed that the current efforts are on target for the needs of the livestock and rendering industries and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, that the priorities for the research programs established in previous meetings were still valid, and that changes in the research direction are not appropriate at this time."

Marsh and his allies in the group disagree. "They've had this information for a number of years. Their conclusions are different than ours," said Marsh. "We have been trying to change their diagnostic parameters for scrapie and BSE. But they are very reluctant."

In further disregard of the available evidence, last October APHIS issued a BSE "Fact Sheet" that points to BSE cases in Britain as providing diagnostic models—once again ignoring the possibility that the symptoms and pathology of BSE in the U.S. might be different from those in Britain. Further, sounding very much like their British counterparts, USDA officials who wrote the fact sheet sought to reassure the public: "To date no scientific evidence indicates that BSE is a human health hazard." They did not mention the fact that when sheep are inoculated with material from a CJD-infected human brain, the sheep develop scrapie.

Ironically, that same month the USDA canceled its "Scrapie Eradication Program"—which was designed to rid the U.S. of the disease—and replaced it with a scrapie-con-



control program that was "entirely voluntary." According to the USDA, the eradication program was "replaced because of cost, poor producer cooperation and failure to adequately control scrapie."

And although the USDA and FDA have decided not to take any preventative action, the USDA has already devised a BSE public-relations strategy. According to APHIS, which prepared the PR plan, "The mere perception that BSE might exist in the United States could have devastating effects on our domestic markets for beef and dairy products." The plan advises APHIS to "avoid public relations problems such as have occurred in the U.K." One such problem, according to APHIS, was that the British Ministry of Health initiated a registry for CJD. As "BSE: Public Relations" points out, "This [registry] appeared to legitimize concern about a link between BSE and human health."

The USDA's PR blueprint goes on to say that the British also made the mistake of denying that public health might be endangered. "The Ministry assured the public that there was no danger from eating beef when, in fact, absolute safety cannot be proven, and the safety of British beef cannot be demonstrated for 20 or more years."

The document further states: "With BSE there are two issues where agriculture is vulnerable to media scrutiny.

These are the practice of feeding rendered ruminant products to ruminants and the risk to human health. ... The risk to human health is a very sensitive issue and will become even more sensitive if BSE were to occur in the United States. Some scientists have stated publicly that BSE may be a human health risk."

As for the question of "feeding rendered ruminant products to ruminants," the USDA and the FDA, which regulate animal feed products, have decided not to interfere with the beef industry practice of feeding dead cows to living cows.

The USDA, however, has considered banning this practice. Another internal USDA report titled "BSE: Rendering Policy," examines six preventative measures that could regulate the rendering industry "prior to BSE being discovered." Last on the list of options is a complete prohibition against using rendered sheep and cattle in all ruminant feeds. According to the internal document, this position is supported by "some" APHIS staff members who "prefer this option because it minimizes risk [to public health]." These staff members, according to the document, are

among the analysts who believe "that a spongiform encephalopathy agent is present in the U.S. cattle population specifically and is associated with transmissible mink encephalopathy." According to the document, Marsh's hypothesis "could possibly justify restrictions on the use of cattle-origin rendered products in ruminant feeds."

But the "disadvantage" of this approach, APHIS explains, is "that the cost to the livestock and rendering industries would be substantial" and that such a change in policy "could pose major problems for the U.S. livestock and rendering industries."

Consequently, the USDA and FDA, putting corporate interests above public health, have decided that preventative action is not needed. In a July 1991 letter, John Honstead, head of Animal Feed Safety at the FDA, wrote, "The FDA should not at this time recommend a ban on ruminant [brains] in rendered products destined for cattle feeding." Instead, he recommended that the FDA "establish a Center for Veterinary Medicine working group on BSE ... to develop written plans to handle BSE scenarios in case BSE is found in the U.S."

In other words, don't worry whether the hamburger you eat today could infect you with the disease you incubate tomorrow. Washington is studying the problem. ◀

## THE ADVENTURES OF A HUGE MOUTH

by Peter Hannan



## GENDER POLITICS

## Back to the future

*A leading anthropologist looks at how women lost equality in ancient times—and how they may get it back in the 21st century.*

By Helen Fisher

**T**he plow. There is probably no single tool in human history that wreaked such havoc between women and men or stimulated so many changes in human patterns of sex and love. Exactly when the plow appeared remains unknown. The first farmers used the hoe or digging stick. Then sometime before 3000 B.C. someone invented the "ard," a primitive plow with a stone blade and handle like a plow's.

What a difference this made.

Anthropologists have found that in cultures—past and present—where people garden with a hoe, women do the bulk of the cultivating; in many societies women are relatively powerful as well. But with the introduction of the plow—which required more male strength—much of the essential farm labor became men's work. Moreover, women lost their time-hon-

ored roles as independent gatherers who provided the evening meal. And soon after the plow became crucial to production, a sexual double standard emerged among farming people. Women were judged inferior to men.

The first written evidence of women's subjugation in farming communities comes from law codes in ancient Mesopotamia dating from about 1100 B.C., when women were described as chattels, possessions. One code indicated that a wife could be killed for fornication, but her husband was permitted to copulate outside of wedlock—as long as he did not violate another man's property, his wife.

Such strictures can be found in ancient farming cultures around the world—Sumeria, Babylonia, Assyria, Egypt, classical Greece and Rome, Europe, India, China and Japan. "Wives be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord," the New Testament bid.

Did the onset of farming mean a paradise lost for women? Many contemporary feminists think so. They argue that the female figurines found in archaeological sites and traditional

contemporary societies are evidence of primitive matriarchies.

A number of 19th-century thinkers, including Friedrich Engels, also claimed that before the onset of farming, women ruled. In the earliest days of agriculture, Engels proposed, property was communally owned; women and men lived in matrilineal kin groups (that is, children trace their descent through the mother's lineage) rather than in nuclear families headed by males; paternity was relatively unimportant; divorce and philandering were commonplace; women gathered at least as many subsistence foods as men did; and women ran the extended family home.

Then, as men and women began to grow crops and herd animals, men's roles as farmers and shepherds became increasingly important. Over time, men emerged as owners of the only valuable property—the soil and beasts. Men then used their power as property owners to tie women into monogamy. And as monogamy undermined a wife's ties and obligations to a wider kin group, it ushered in slavery for women. Engels called this transition "the world historical defeat of the female sex."

Despite such theories, there is no archaeological evidence that a primitive matriarchy ever existed. And anthropologists have found no extant society that is matriarchal; few are even matrilineal. Furthermore, of the 93 societies surveyed by sociologist Martin Whyte in the '70s, 83 had no folk beliefs that women were once all-powerful. And in those cultures where people did worship female gods and recount myths of female dominion, no female political supremacy existed.

There is, however, some truth to the belief that women were once much more powerful. The vast majority of hunting-gathering peoples are (and probably always were) rela-



tively egalitarian. No extant hunting-gathering, foraging or gardening society has a rigid codified sexual double standard. And women have had inferior status in societies that use the plow for agriculture. So, although there probably never were any primitive matriarchies, 19th-century thinkers like Engels were partly correct: a *relative equality* between the sexes was probably the rule in many ancient, preagricultural societies, and this balance of power between the sexes indeed became *pronounced inequality* sometime soon after the plow was introduced.

In the '70s the Marxist-feminist anthropologist Eleanor Leacock streamlined modern ideas about this change with yet another scenario. She wisely dropped the idea of the primitive matriarchy. But she marshaled data from around

the world to prove that in prehistoric band societies women were, in fact, largely equals. And she hypothesized that as farming men began to make trade goods, sell trade items and monopolize trade networks, farmers' wives became subordinate to their husbands. Like Engels before her, Leacock also proposed that the emergence of the monogamous nuclear family as the vital economic unit (in conjunction with sedentary living and the plow) was central to the deterioration of women's lives.

My own scenario for the evolution of the sexual double standard begins with a simple premise. The plow was heavy; it needed to be pulled by a large animal; it required the strength of men. As hunters, husbands had supplied the luxuries that made life thrilling as well as some of the daily fare; but as tillers of the soil, they became critical to survival. Women's vital role as gatherers, on the other hand, was undermined as our ancestors began to rely less on wild plants for food and more on domesticated crops. Long the providers of substantial daily fare, women now assumed the secondary tasks of weeding, picking and preparing the evening meal. So anthropologists agree that as men's farm labor became essential to survival, the primary role in subsistence shifted from women to men.

This one ecological factor—the skewed division of labor between the sexes in subsistence and men's control of the vital resources of production—is sufficient to explain women's decline from social power. Those who own the purse strings rule the world. But other factors conjoined to create women's fall. With the advent of plow agriculture, neither husband nor wife could divorce. They worked the land together. Neither partner could dig up half the soil and depart. They had become tied to their mutual real estate and to one another—permanent monogamy.

How the plow and permanent monogamy contributed to the decline of women's worlds is best understood in conjunc-



tion with a third insidious phenomenon of farming peoples—rank. For millennia “big men” must have arisen among our nomadic ancestors during hunting, foraging and trading expeditions. But hunter-gatherers have strong traditions of equality and sharing; for the vast majority of our human heritage, formal ranks did not exist.

To organize the yearly farming harvest, however, and store grain and fodder, distribute surplus food, oversee long-distance, systematic trade and speak for the community at regional gatherings, chiefs arose. Then with the subsequent spread of plow agriculture and village life, political organization grew more and more complex—and, undoubtedly, more hierarchical as well.

Another factor that surely played a role in the decline of women’s social and sexual rights was war. As villages proliferated and population density increased, people were obliged to defend their property, even extend their landholdings when they could. Warriors became invaluable to social life. And as anthropologist Robert Carneiro points out, everywhere in the world where fighting enemies is important to daily living, men come to increase their power over women.

Men’s more important economic roles as farmers, couples that were obliged to remain together on their mutual home range, villagers who needed chiefs to organize their work and societies that needed warriors to defend their soil—what a volatile mixture. Here was the perfect opportunity for one sex to gain authority over the other.

Indeed, that’s just what happened. Patriarchy sprang up

across Eurasia and seeded deep into the soil.

Not until factories emerged behind the barns of agricultural Europe and America did men and women start to regain their independence. Patterns of sex and love and marriage began to swing forward to the past.

The Industrial Revolution launched a trend of more women in the workplace. Tracing this single phenomenon in the United States explains much about the pulse of modern family life.

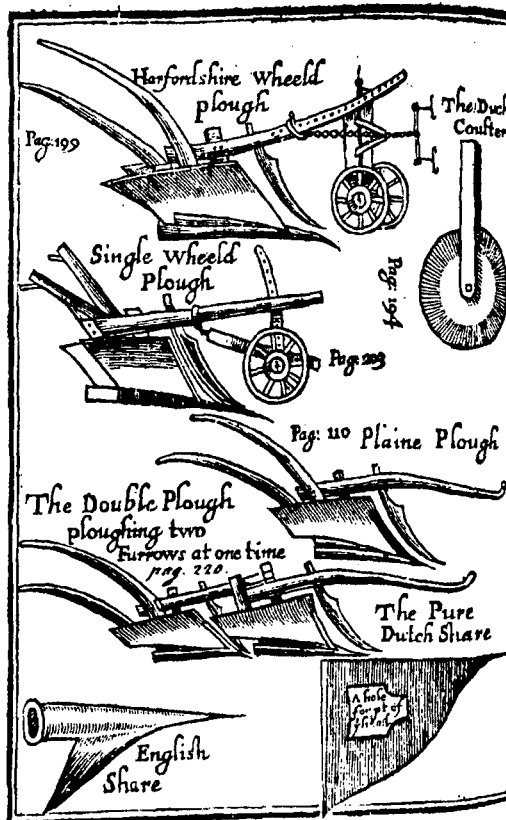
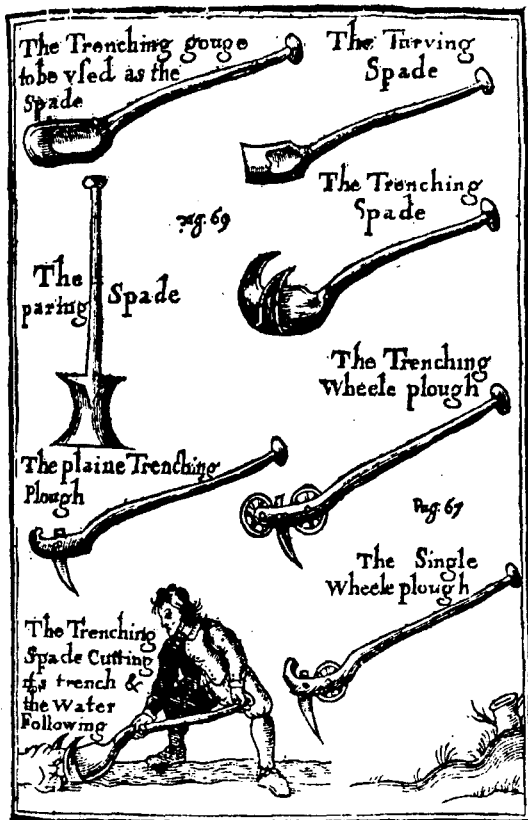
As soon as hamlets of European settlers began to dot the Atlantic coast, American women began to make money outside the home by selling their surplus soap, their jars of raspberry preserves, their scented candles and home-baked pies. A few spinsters set up shops to sell books or imported clothes. Some widows became innkeepers or land agents. But the vast majority of women kept a home.

By 1815, however, textile mills had begun to rise behind the cherry trees and chicken yards, and some young women had begun to leave home for factory work. They sought regular pay and shorter work hours—time and money to spend thumbing through catalogues for store-bought clothes. Even married women began to take home piecework for extra cash. America was turning industrial.

By 1900 only about 20 percent of the women were in the labor force, most of them immigrants, youths and singles. Nevertheless, more married women worked than in preceding decades—and divorce rates, which had begun to rise in the 19th century, rose some more.

The 20th century saw a periodic escalation of these social trends launched by the industrial age: more working women, more divorce. With one exception. America’s emergence as a super-power after World War II brought an era of marital stability some tend to think of as a golden age. In the ’60s, however, America resumed its modern course: between 1960 and 1983, the number of working women doubled. Between 1966 and 1976, the divorce rate doubled too. And in 1981, remarriage rates hit a modern high.

After many centuries of permanent monogamy among our farming forebears, the





primitive human pattern of marriage, divorce and remarriage has emerged again.

Where do we go from here? The United States is now at the confluence of several business trends that should affect women, men and love. Foremost, many of the baby boomers are going into business for themselves. These men and women joined the workforce in their 20s, and now many feel stuck in middle management. They have the training, the experience, the networks and the wish to break away from conventional employment. Corporate America would like to see them go. Businesses are suffering from a bloated middle management. Three million American executives lost their jobs in the '80s, and corporate "downsizing" is likely to continue.

And as corporations push the boomers out, the service industries are sucking the boomers in. Our senior citizens, working women, all of the singles, even the large corporations buy a host of services. Not just day care and take-out restaurants but masseuses, decorators and the like; some harried careerists even employ specialists to clean and organize their closets.

So as the futurist Marvin Cetron sees it, "By the turn of the century, most of our middle-sized institutions will have vanished, but thousands of tiny companies will be flourishing beneath the feet of the giants." And facilitating the growth of all these small businesses are a host of new technological innovations, such as home computers and fax machines. The timing is perfect; Alvin Toffler's vision of the "electronic cottage" has come of age.

Globalization is a second major shift in business. Companies are spreading their offices around the world. These businesses need "culture brokers," individuals who can move effectively between different societies with different manners and different languages.

These trends—entrepreneurism and globalization—favor women.

Research shows that women are, on the average, more verbal than men. They are also better at picking up all sorts of nonverbal cues. And they are outstanding at networking. Before the computer, before the knitting needle, even before the bow and arrow, women also developed another business tool—arbitration. Negotiating is a female skill.

A last strength of the 21st-century woman will be her age. In traditional societies women become more assertive and self-assured as they get older; they generally become more powerful in political, religious and social life as well.

## *The rise of small-scale entrepreneurism and economic globalization favor women.*

Undoubtedly this is because they are less tied to the chores of raising children. But biology may play a role. With menopause, levels of estrogen decline and the body's dosage of testosterone becomes unmasked—and testosterone is often found in the company of authority and rank.

"There is no greater power in the world," Margaret Mead once said, "than the zest of a post-menopausal woman." With words, with nonverbal acuity, with networking and negotiating skills—and also with unleashed testosterone—women will probably become increasingly visible in modern national and international business life.

And powerful working women will almost certainly sustain the long-term trends initiated by the Industrial Revolution: later marriage, fewer children, more divorce and more remarriage.

Of all the social changes that are occurring, however, the most interesting to me is the following: we are shedding the agricultural tradition and, in some respects, returning to our nomadic roots.

Few of us still live in the house where we grew up. Rather, many of us have several places we call home—our parents' house, the office, our own residence and perhaps a vacation spot. We migrate between them. We no longer grow our own food. We now hunt and gather in the grocery store and then carry home our catch—as *Homo erectus* did over a million years ago. (I am not surprised that we like fast foods either, or eat between meals here and there as we move through the day; our ancestors certainly ate as they

## Anatomy of Love

by Helen Fisher

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marched along.) We commute to work again. And we have a loose network of friends and relatives, many of whom live far away.

We are shedding the sexual attitudes of farm life too. In preindustrial Europe, a wedding often marked a merger of property and an alliance between families, so marriages had to be stable and permanent. This necessity is gone. A woman's job was to bear her husband's seed and raise his young; hence our agrarian forerunners required virginity at marriage. This custom is gone. Many of our farming ancestors carefully arranged their marriages. This practice is largely gone. They banned divorce. This is gone. They had a double standard for adultery. This has changed. And they celebrated two marital mottoes: "Honor thy husband" and "Till death us do part." These, too, are disappearing.

For the past several thousand years, most farm women

had only three basic options: to be uneducated, subservient housewives; to be cloistered nuns; to be courtesans, prostitutes or concubines. Men, on the other hand, held the sole responsibility for the family income and welfare of the young.

Now vast numbers of women work outside the home. Double-income families are increasingly the norm. We are more nomadic. And we have a growing equality between the sexes. In these respects, we are returning to traditions of love and marriage that are compatible with our ancient human spirit. ◀

**Helen Fisher** is a research associate in the department of anthropology at the American Museum of Natural History in New York. This essay was excerpted with permission from her book, *Anatomy of Love: The Natural History of Monogamy, Adultery and Divorce*.

## Are men born with power?

**W**hy did ancient agricultural societies become patriarchies instead of matriarchies? Why didn't women seize the rule? The brute force necessary to drive the plow and the strength required in warfare both suffice to answer this question. But I think at least one more primary factor was involved in the florescence of patriarchy and the decline of women's worlds—biology.

In every single society where ranks are prevalent, men hold the majority of the authoritative roles. In fact, in 88 percent of 93 societies canvassed, *all* local and intermediate political leaders are men; in 84 percent of these cultures men hold *all* the top leadership positions in the kin group too. This is not because women are barred from these positions. In many of these cultures—such as the United States—women are permitted to seek influential positions in government. Today greater numbers of women are indeed running for office. But even now women do not seek political positions with anything near the regularity that men do.

To explain this enormous gender difference in who seeks and obtains political rank, sociologist Steven Goldberg has proposed that men are neuro-endocrinologically wired, by means of testosterone that sexes the fetal brain, for a greater drive to seek status; he calls this drive "male attainment." Thus, because of their biological drive to acquire rank, men more regularly give up time, pleasure, health, safety, affection and relaxation to attain positions of rank, authority and power.

This is a dangerous idea. Most feminists will certainly reject it, as will anyone who dismisses the biological factors involved in human action. But as one who takes science seriously, I cannot ignore the possibility that biology plays a role in the acquisition of rank. In fact, several lines of reasoning support this conclusion.

The brain is indeed sexed before birth by fetal hormones. There is a clear link between testosterone and aggressive behavior in animals and people. High rank is also associated with high levels of male hormones in men and monkeys. Also, women in many cultures assume more leadership positions after their childbearing years are over. There certainly are cultural reasons for this. Released from the constant chores of rearing young, postmenopausal women are certainly liberated to pursue activities outside the home. But there may be a biological reason for their assertiveness as well. Levels of estrogen decline with menopause, unmasking levels of testosterone. Nature has concocted a chemical that possibly contributes to the drive for rank.

There may be another chemical in the cocktail too—serotonin, another of the brain's molecules. The highest-ranking male vervet monkey in a troop, scientists have established, has consistently higher levels of serotonin in his blood. Even when male monkeys are artificially administered serotonin, their rank goes up; and male monkeys given drugs that inhibit the secretion of serotonin experience a drop in rank.

Among human males the same correlations prevail. Officers in college student groups show higher levels of serotonin in their blood than do nonofficers, as do leaders of college sports teams. These simple correlations seem not to be exhibited in women. And scientists preliminarily conclude that women and female nonhuman primates exhibit a more complex behavioral and physiological system of dominance.

Nevertheless, there seems to be a rather direct correlation between testosterone and rank—as well as some evidence that other brain substances contribute to the biology of hierarchy.

—H. F.

**B L A C K A M E R I C A**

# Clinton's fear of commitment

youths most at risk of falling through the tattered social safety net.

Senate Republicans filibustered to stop the legislation and, rather than seizing the opportunity to educate the public on the need for such a bill, the Clinton administration simply threw in the towel. The retreat in the Senate, however, is only one of many problems black leaders have with the direction of this Democratic administration.

African-American leaders also are concerned about the administration's Haitian immigration policy, its reported fondness for "managed competition" in health care and its retention of the failed Reagan-Bush war on drugs and of regressive Cold War policies toward Africa and other regions of the Third World. But there has been little public evidence of African-Americans' growing discontent with the Clinton regime.

That's understandable; Clinton has been extraordinarily receptive to black leadership's request for access. During his short tenure, he already has had met with representatives from several African-American groups, including the Congressional Black Caucus, the NAACP, the National Urban League, the

*There is a growing concern that the president lacks real devotion to issues African-Americans consider important.*

By Salim Muwakkil

**P**resident Bill Clinton's popularity remains relatively high among African-Americans surveyed in recent polls, even as his national ratings continue to decline. He has maintained his black support by naming more African-Americans to influential positions than any president in history, by affording black leadership unprecedented access to the White House and by an adept use of symbolism.

But there is a growing concern that Clinton lacks a real commitment to the issues African-Americans consider crucial. Their concern was heightened by his administration's hasty retreat from the \$16.3 billion stimulus and jobs package that the president himself characterized as an emergency bill. The legislation would have provided for 500,000 summer jobs to

Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Operation PUSH. What's more, Clinton has defied precedent by naming several blacks to influential posts. (Since the Kennedy administration, there's been only one black face in the cabinet at any one time.) The former Arkansas governor has appointed five African-Americans to cabinet-level positions and named several others for sub-cabinet posts.

In addition to Ron Brown at Commerce, Mike Espy at Agriculture, Hazel O'Leary at Energy and Jesse Brown at the Veterans Administration, there's also Jocelyn Elders, who was named surgeon general, the country's top medical officer, and Lee Brown, who was recently tabbed to be the administration's "drug czar."

But the Clinton administration seems reluctant to push for legislation that directly addresses the crisis in urban black America. This reticence has sparked a renewed debate about the president's ideological pedigree.

Bill Clinton won this White House by campaigning from the right. His prominence in the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), a centrist group of mostly Southern politicians, provided him with a political persona that clearly distinguished him from the last two Democratic presidential candidates.

Clinton's rightward lean was a tactical plus in the campaign. But many of Clinton's black supporters argued that, once elected, he would adjust his ideological stance. The first weeks of his presidency seemed to vindicate that view. Pundits began characterizing Clinton as the "Trojan Horse" president who gained entrance to the White House disguised



as a new Democrat but who was governing instead like an old-fashioned liberal Democrat.

From the view of black leadership, the label of "old-fashioned liberal" is a compliment rather than an epithet. And many were pleasantly surprised by Clinton's early signals and symbolic gestures. After 12 barren Republican years, the new president stoked the hopes of those desperate for an administration sympathetic to their concerns.

But as the new regime maneuvers to establish its political position, it has scuttled many of those early hopes. Some of Clinton's black critics had argued all along that those hopes were never more than wishful thinking. They insist that the dynamics of Clinton's political method were easily discernible during a campaign in which he accepted many of the Republican right's ideological premises.

By refusing to challenge the conservative nostrums that dominated public discourse during the Reagan-Bush years, Clinton has allowed those ideas to sink even deeper into U.S. political culture. He is thus forced to justify his policy initiatives according to criteria outlined by the vanquished Republicans. Put simply, the electoral victory of the Democrats' standard-bearer did little to alter the intellectual debate about U.S. politics. In its tactical attempt to pull the Democratic Party to the right, the DLC often made common cause with conservative theorists.

After lending credence to the logic of the right, Clinton is now trapped within the context of that logic. Thus, tax incentives and urban enterprise zones are presented as ways to address the crisis in the nation's inner cities—approaches that differ little from those offered during the dozen-year reign of Reagan/Bush-Bush/Quayle. Since candidate Clinton offered no ideological alternative to the business-focused corporatism of his Republican predecessors, President Clinton seems bereft of any transcending governing principal.

"In the shadow of the Los Angeles police trials and the lack of progress, the president had a unique opportunity to link his stimulus-jobs package to urban distress," says Ronald Walters, chair of Howard University's political science department and a widely published author on black and progressive politics. "In fact," Walters notes, "his administration had not even considered using the national concern about Los Angeles to help educate the country about the extent of this worsening crisis. The most depressing part of this, though, is that the president's people seem to have not thought through what an alternative urban policy should be."

This lack of political vision has made Clinton easy prey for the surly Republicans ever eager to employ their obstructionist tactics. But it's not just Republicans who are exploiting Clinton's ideological vulnerability. Georgia Sen. Sam Nunn, a fellow

DLC-er, became the president's first congressional opponent when he spoke out against Clinton's plans to allow openly gay and lesbian recruits into the military.

Walters and many other progressive analysts are mystified by Clinton's reluctance to use the bully pulpit to educate the electorate about the damage done by Reaganomics and other conservative policies. For example, they say, the president could easily have explained how the years of Republican rule widened the gap between the rich and the poor. When Senate Republicans dismissed the recently defeated stimulus package as "pork," Clinton could have demonstrated the emergency needs of America's cities and outlined the dire social consequences of failing to meet those needs.

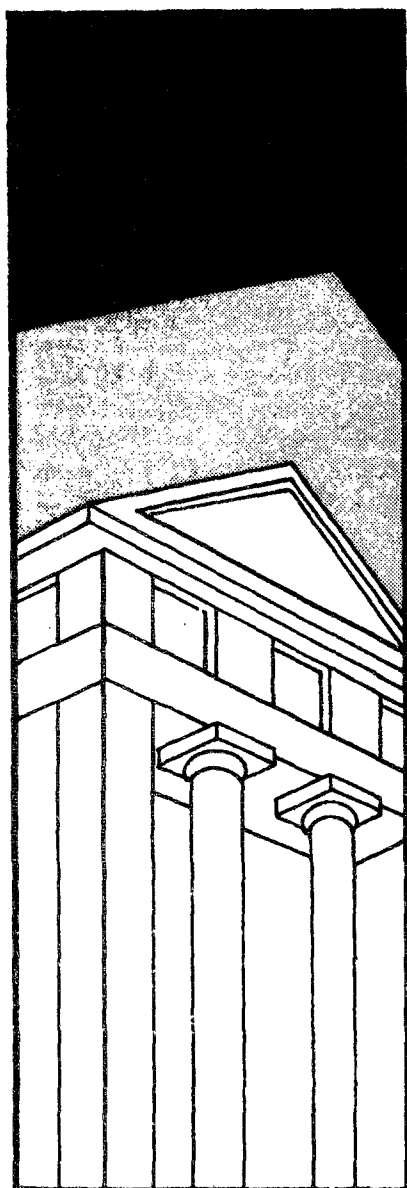
In general, they argue that many Americans are still numb from 12 years of "morning in America" mythology and are in need of a compelling reality check. But most black and left critics have remained silent, hopeful that at least some of Clinton's initiatives will shift the direction of national policy and address the tragedy of poverty and its attendant ills.

What's more, conservative critics have been savaging the president since his election, subjecting the former Arkansas governor to an incessant barrage of recrimination and ridicule. Their nonstop litany of abuse tends to mute other critics who fear making common cause with the rabid right, arguing that Clinton's post-election liberalism may simply have been a pose designed to mollify his black supporters and the old-style Democrats who still wield financial clout.

All these speculations feed on the observation that the president is a mere political vessel with no core convictions—neither an old nor new Democrat but a shrewd manipulator of public symbols who is following the drift of political winds. ◀



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## LABOR MOVEMENT

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B

ill Clinton wants to help American workers be successful high-skill, high-wage competitors in the global economy. To pursue that goal, Secretary of Labor Robert Reich commissioned a largely academic panel of labor experts, which begins meeting this month, to suggest changes in labor laws and institutions by next year that would "enhance workplace productivity through labor-management cooperation and employee participation."

This mission statement enshrines improved economic performance of individual businesses as the overriding goal of labor law. The 10 commission members, including one employer, Xerox chairman Paul Allaire, and chaired by former Labor secretary and Harvard Professor John Dunlop, are all sympathetic to unions. But Reich's directive not only risks giving short shrift to many of the

*If Bill Clinton really wants to strengthen the economy, he should encourage the growth of unions.*

By David Moberg

historic goals of the labor movement but also may, surprisingly, not even be the best way of strengthening the overall economy and reaching Clinton's goal.

Congress rewrote labor law in the Depression not only to reduce industrial conflict but also to give workers clear collective rights, to change the balance of power at work, and to boost the economy by raising wages. Since then Congress and the courts have changed labor law to undermine the rights and power of workers and restrain unionism. If any labor law is reformed in the coming years, it will occur in a context most inauspicious for unions: unions now represent a smaller percentage of private sector union workers (less than 12 percent) than they did at the end of the anti-union '20s. Even worse, despite a few hopeful signs, labor barely exists as a social movement, with widespread organizing campaigns and broad grass-roots alliances.

In the Depression, union organizers gave workers leaflets saying that President Roosevelt wanted them to join a union. Asked on

the *MacNeil-Lehrer Newshour* whether he would recommend that workers with problems organize a union, Reich said he would first suggest that management and workers "come up with ways of working together constructively." The administration does not favor increased unionization, he said. "We don't want to load the deck in either direction."

"I don't care whether you're unionized or non-unionized, labor is going to have a voice," Reich continued. "You have to have some sort of system for giving it a voice. I don't care again whether it's a traditional organization system. Some of the most innovative companies in America have come up with different ways of providing workers with a voice. But that involvement is absolutely critical."

Reich argues that workers must have a "voice" for businesses to maximize their productivity. At their best, unions have been a voice for justice on the job, higher wages and solidarity—goals not necessarily related to international competitiveness. But many labor strategists think their best bet for labor law reform is to argue that unions are good for the economy.

It is silly to argue whether labor-management cooperation in itself is good or bad. Workers inevitably cooperate with their employers simply by going to work, and some problems can be solved through rational dialogue. The real question is: to what ends and on whose terms should workers and employers cooperate?

Yet there are real differences of interest and power between workers and employers. Unions attempt not simply to provide workers a means of expressing their views but also to give them some power. Any approach to labor law reform that glosses over the grossly disproportionate power of bosses and workers is a fraud. Cooperation is meaningful

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**Labor Secretary Robert Reich wants workers to have a "voice" but no power.**

only when each party has a meaningful right to say either yes or no to proposals—in other words, only when there is the possibility for conflict.

Throughout the '80s, comparatively enlightened business strategists argued that businesses should encourage involvement or participation of workers, teamwork, quality circles and other attempts to gain workers' cooperation in boosting quality, productivity and sales. Despite the theory—appealing in the way it restores skilled labor to a central role—workplace cooperation has yielded very mixed results.

Economist Barry Bluestone and former United Auto Workers Vice President Irving Bluestone, in their new book, *Negotiating the Future: A Labor View of American Business*, sum up research on whether the new cooperation has worked this way: "Sometimes yes, usually no. In some cases productivity improves; in a few it declines; in most not much happens at all."

The consistent thread in research about new forms of work organization is that positive results occur only when there is a vigorous, sustained program with strong participation by workers who feel secure in their jobs. Although four-fifths of the top 1,000 U.S. companies report using some type of employee involvement program, frequently these are superficial and are often adopted to keep out unions. In the worst cases, companies exploit workers' goodwill and knowledge, then use the advantages they have gained to counterattack, as happened over the past few years at companies like Caterpillar and A. E. Staley.

"Participation turns out to work best when it is organized jointly between union and management and when

workers have a voice independent from management that cannot be unilaterally stifled by 'the boss,'" the Bluestones argue. Similarly, a recent volume of papers on unions and economic competitiveness, published by the liberal Economic Policy Institute (EPI), concluded that workplace innovations are at least as likely to occur in union as in non-union workplaces and "are more likely to result in increased productivity in the organized environment."

Research over the past decade has shown that unions tend to increase productivity in firms. Indeed, economists Maryellen R. Kelley and Bennett Harrison found that unionized metalworking firms were more efficient and provided more job security for workers than non-union firms with employee involvement. Other research reported in the EPI volume persuasively argues that unions do not impede technological innovation nor contribute significantly to the nation's trade deficit. Reich, an EPI founder, is well aware of this research. So it might seem that the work of his commission is straightforward: it should figure out what will promote unionism.

If the commission does want to further unionism, it should raze the legal barriers that make the cost of unionization high for both workers and unions. Joining a union should be considered a civil right, protected by the severe penalties available through civil rights legislation, as proposed by labor attorney Thomas Geoghegan, author of *Which Side Are You On?*

Other important changes to make it easier for workers to form unions if they want them include:

- Barring employers from intervening in any way in a



worker's decision to join a union.

- Providing stiff and swift penalties for employer meddling, especially firing pro-union workers.

- Entitling workers to form a union simply by getting a super majority—say, 60 percent—of any unit to sign union cards and pay a nominal membership fee.

- Permitting workers to form a minority union to bargain on their own behalf even when a majority of workers reject a union to cover the entire workplace.

- Providing arbitration to guarantee that balky employers sign a first contract if a union is recognized.

Beyond making it easier for workers to form unions, the law should be reformed to change unions in ways that make them better suited for contributing to economic productivity as well as their traditional aims.

- Workers with some decision-making powers, now barred from unions, should be able to join or form unions.

- Unions should have access to full financial information about the firm “so that unions can bargain based on real economic facts,” as commission member and Stanford University law professor William Gould argues.

- Unions should have the right to bargain over what are now management rights, such as decisions to introduce technology, open and close plants, and make new capital investments.

- Unions also need to have much of their lost power restored, especially the right to strike without being permanently replaced. Workers should be able, as they could before the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act was passed, to act in solidarity with other workers through secondary boycotts, refusals to handle goods or services from a company where workers are on strike, and other sympathetic actions.

The fundamental aim of labor law reform should not be cooperation but rather industrial democracy, a longstanding labor goal that is a natural extension of core American political beliefs. But that will require further democratization of unions themselves, including guarantees of members' right to direct election of officers and equal access to members of serious competing candidates. It would be good to abandon the practice of dues collection by employers, forcing union officials to be regularly accountable to members as they ask for dues.

Yet unions now encompass a tiny fraction of the workforce, and, if current trends prevail, will represent only 5 percent of private sector workers by the turn of the century. Out of desperation, many labor policy intellectuals—including at least four of the 10 commissioners—are advocating expanded non-union representation at the workplace. Some ideas have labor support, such as proposals in current legislation for mandatory labor-management health and safety committees in all workplaces of more than 10 employees or joint training committees to oversee new federal training initiatives.

These proposals recognize that many federal labor policies, including fair labor standards and safety protection, can be best enforced by people on the job, not by a necessar-

ily inadequate corps of inspectors. But they are also part of a tendency away from the anarchic, decentralized and fragmented pattern of American labor relations.

In most other industrialized countries, either national or sectoral negotiations or national laws establish relatively uniform standards of pay, benefits and workplace protections. This is the only way to take these core labor demands out of competition, as unions have always wanted to do.

In addition, some executives and some labor policy analysts are increasingly interested in relaxing the bans on “company unions,” labor organizations financed by management that were common as anti-union alternatives in the '20s. Employer and labor groups closely watched a decision last year by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) involving an Indiana company called Electromation. The NLRB ruled that Electromation violated the company union ban by setting up an “action committee” to deal with complaints when the Teamsters were trying to organize the firm. Employers worried that their employee involvement plans could be in jeopardy.

Although the board did not undermine most employer-initiated participation plans, there is nevertheless increasing sympathy—and not only in employer circles—to the idea of giving management broader, more clearly defined rights to set up and finance a variety of such schemes. Yet when union ranks are so diminished, the proposal opens the door to feeble, management-dominated substitutes for legitimate unions and, the research suggests, produce limited economic results.

Harvard economist Richard Freeman, a member of the Labor-Management Commission, and Joel Rogers, a law, politics and sociology professor at the University of Wisconsin, have proposed that the federal government encourage the creation of “employee participation committees,” an American counterpart to the European works councils. (They also favor making it easier for workers to organize unions and for employers to initiate and support nonunion participation, as well as strengthening all workers' rights to collective action.)

In most European countries, unions are broad-scale, centralized bargaining institutions with limited presence in the workplace. Since World War II most governments have mandated some form of council with rights to information about a wide range of business decisions and to consultation on everything from personnel policy to investment. But councils do not collectively bargain for contracts.

The system is most elaborated in Germany, where it overlaps with legally required “co-determination” of some issues by workers and managers, often through worker representatives on boards of directors. Germany's strong union movement, which represents nearly half the workforce but sets wages for many more through its contracts, contests each council election and typically wins about four-fifths of the seats.

Rogers argues that these councils are most effective when they have the technical and political support of a strong

union movement. The councils contribute to democracy and economic efficiency inside the firm, help enforce labor laws, extend "worker-friendly" practices beyond the union sector, provide information to management, inform workers and help them adjust, and influence corporate plans, he said.

Yet local unions in this country often address many of the workplace issues works councils handle in Europe, although without the rights to information and discussion of management strategy. Without the leftist parties and strong labor movement common in Western Europe, councils in this country would be less effective and more likely to subordinate workers to company aims. They would simply intensify the already undesirable fragmentation of American workers. Likewise, as Rogers acknowledges, in the current climate such employee participation committees would probably substitute for potential unions.

For the sake of both workers and the overall economy, it is as important for workers here to cooperate more with each other as it is for them to cooperate with management—a largely taboo topic.

Why not just push for more unions? "We need to talk in terms of a competitive economy and labor-management cooperation, but neither is the issue," argues Richard Bensinger, director of the AFL-CIO-affiliated Organizing Institute. "The fundamental issue is whether it will be public policy of this country to have more unions."

But University of Buffalo law professor James Atleson says, "One of the strong arguments proponents of change [to new forms of representation] have is that things look so bad now, and probably will get worse, that anything would be better than now."

Rogers and Freeman note that even though one-third or more of non-union workers want to join a union (and would thereby roughly triple the size of the labor movement), the vast majority of those disapproving of unions

nevertheless "favor some sort of institutionalized representation of workers within firms."

Works councils can be strong or weak; in the current political climate they would likely be toothless if approved in this country. But they would be more palatable if works councils had to be set up and give their assent before management could initiate any employee participation scheme. Also, workers should have the right to convert an "employee participation committee" into a union at their discretion (or change a union to a committee). That would also give the committees more clout.

"It is important that we provide individuals with more choices or more vehicles of possible representation that we have at present," says Labor-Management Commission member Paula Voos, who argues for a fairly strong form of employee representation committees.

But as Rutgers University law professor James Pope points out, "Any serious labor law reform ought to be tailored in part to what the labor movement is and where it is going. Lots of new tactics and new forms of organizing are being tried out, but none has truly emerged to give expression to the democratic desires of working people for control over their working life," as industrial unionism did in the '30s.

If workers were truly given a choice about what form of representation they had at work, there would undoubtedly be a great variety of employee organizations. With more variety, more workers would probably want to join. But the law now encourages neither choice nor variety. Whatever forms they may take, these organizations are likely to contribute to a stronger economy only if they give workers meaningful power and rights to information about and influence over the key business decisions that affect their working lives.

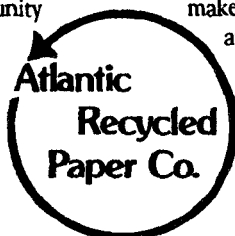
If labor wants such power, it will not be handed over politely but will materialize when a social movement emerges strong enough to win it. ▲



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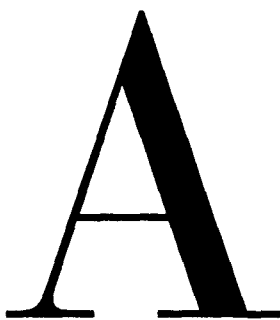
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## H I G H T E C H N O L O G Y

# America boots up



***America has rebounded in precisely those high-technology industries that provoked the most alarm in the late '80s.***

**By John B. Judis**  
WASHINGTON D.C.

At the beginning of the decade, the U.S. appeared locked in a losing battle for world economic supremacy with Japan. And more was at stake than bragging rights. As Lester Thurow argued in *Head-to-Head*, if the U.S. continued to lose out in the high-profit, high-wage industries, Americans could expect to suffer a falling standard of living. America's eventual fate was compared not only to Great Britain, but to countries like Brazil and Nigeria.

It now appears, however, that these fears of imminent decline—held by this author, among others—were somewhat exaggerated. The U.S. still trails Japan—and Germany—in some key manufacturing industries, but in the all-important area of high-technology electronics, it has withstood Japan's challenge and has remained the world's leader. Some of the most strident calls for

American self-sacrifice in the name of international competitiveness should be viewed with skepticism.

America has rebounded in precisely those high-technology industries that provoked the most alarm in the late '80s: semiconductors, personal and mainframe computers, and high-definition television (HDTV). In each case, the Japanese were expected to exercise the same kind of domination they had already established in television and VCRs, but it's now clear that the U.S. is in a somewhat stronger position than the Japanese.

**Semiconductors:** Semiconductors, the tiny slabs of silicon that store, sort and transmit data in computers, VCRs, televisions, car engines and almost every other kind of durable good, have been called the oil of the 21st century. Whoever controls their production, it is argued, will dominate manufacturing in the next century.

In the '60s and '70s, American companies enjoyed seemingly unchallengeable superiority in semiconductor production. But by 1985, the Japanese were selling more semiconductors, and many of the American companies had gone out of business. Just as with televisions or watches, the Japanese plan was to edge out American manufacturers at the low-end of production—the "DRAMs" that store memory, but do not process it. The Japanese share of the DRAM market rose from 25 percent in 1980 to 80 percent a decade later. But at this point, the Japanese drive for supremacy abruptly halted.

American government initiatives took some steam out of Japanese efforts. Beginning in 1986, the U.S. retaliated against the Japanese tactic of selling their computer chips below cost on the American market to drive out competitors while simultaneously blocking foreign sales in their own markets. The U.S. insisted that the Japanese raise the market share of foreign chip sales from 8 percent to 20 percent. Since then, American penetration of the Japanese market has steadily risen until it reached 18 percent this year.

In 1987, the U.S. government also began spending \$100 million a year on Sematech, a consortium of semiconductor firms that was founded to develop advanced chip-production techniques. It was money well spent. In the last year, the Silicon Valley-based Applied Materials, aided by Sematech's innovations, surpassed its Japanese competitors to become the world's largest producer of semiconductor production materials.

From 1987 to 1990, Japanese firms had the DRAM business to themselves, and they operated a global cartel, driving up prices. (Washington's free-trade lobbyists, unable to distinguish cause from effect, blamed American anti-dumping actions for the price increases.) But then the Koreans entered the fray, and prices began to plummet. DRAM



production became increasingly unprofitable. Last year, NEC and other Japanese producers suffered huge losses from DRAM production.

Most important, the Japanese never succeeded in mastering the more sophisticated and profitable production of microprocessors—the chips that run everything from computers to space satellites. IBM, AT&T, Motorola and, above all, Intel thoroughly dominate these areas of semiconductor production.

Last year the U.S. regained its lead over Japan in overall semiconductor sales. And measured in sales, Intel, which

displays for laptops, they have ceded printers to Hewlett-Packard's laser jets and disk drives to Seagate and Connor. But more important, they have not been able to compete with major American hardware or software makers. American firms such as Microsoft, Borland and Computer Associates currently have the world software market to themselves.

Japan's failure to compete in software and in microprocessors has threatened the success of their other efforts. As Charles Ferguson and Charles Morris argue in their recent book *Computer Wars*, whoever controls the "architecture" or operating environment of computers can control the overall market, forcing other software and hardware producers to make products according to their specifications. A handful of American firms—Intel, Motorola, Microsoft, Hewlett-Packard, Novell and Apple—continue to set the standards for computer hardware and software.

The American advantage in producing technology that combines complex software and hardware could eventually threaten Japanese supremacy in consumer electronics. Over the next decade, many of the innovations in consumer electronics—from HDTV to "smart telephones" to what Apple's John Sculley calls "personal digital assistants"—will be built with the kind of sophisticated software and microprocessors that American companies excel at producing. Whether the U.S. recaptures the consumer electronics markets will depend on whether it can match Japan's large-scale manufacturing capability and whether it can build distribution networks to compete with those of the Japanese electronics giants.

**Mainframe computers:** Even when the Japanese succeeded, they failed.

From the early '70s, the two largest Japanese computer companies, Fujitsu and Hitachi, subsidized and supervised by government planners, devoted themselves to producing a large mainframe computer that could compete with IBM's models. Aided by the theft of trade secrets from IBM, they are now on the verge of catching the computer giant. Japanese sales of mainframe computers doubled between 1986 and 1991 to \$24 billion.

But just as these companies have begun to produce competitive computers, the market in mainframes has begun to collapse. Corporations and universities that once relied on mainframes can now use networks of minicomputers or even personal computers to accomplish the same tasks at



had abandoned DRAM production in 1986 and dedicated itself to microprocessors, displaced NEC and Toshiba as the world's leading chipmaker.

**Personal computers:** During the '80s, the Japanese also seemed to score impressive gains in personal computers. While Epson and NEC challenged IBM, Apple or Compaq in making machines, Japanese companies were increasingly dominating the production of printers (Epson), monitors (NEC) and other computer peripherals. They also controlled the production of laptops. And they were spending billions creating a software industry.

But here too the Japanese offensive stalled. While the Japanese continue to excel at monitors and the flat-panel

lower cost and the same speed. In 1992, worldwide mainframe sales fell by 20 percent.

As a result, Hitachi and Fujitsu have suffered the same fate as IBM. Both companies endured unprecedented losses in 1992, and both have been forced to resort to layoffs. Hitachi and Fujitsu, which have derived as much as 60 percent of their revenues from mainframes, may even be less equipped than the more diversified IBM to adapt to the new era of small computers.

**HDTV:** In 1989, as the Bush administration was taking office, many knowledgeable politicians and policy experts became hysterical about the threat posed by the Japanese development of HDTV. The Japanese had been working since the mid-'70s on a television system that would permit extra-large screen high-resolution pictures, and by the end of the '80s they were starting to introduce HDTV in Japan.

Technology experts—and credulous journalists like myself—feared that by monopolizing HDTV, the Japanese would be on the crest of the next decade's most important new wave in consumer electronics. The American Electronics Association advocated that the federal government spend \$1.3 billion to combat the Japanese threat. But the Japanese HDTV system turned out to be a bust.

Japanese HDTV, developed by the government-owned NHK, Japan's national broadcasting system, was based on analog rather than digital transmission of broadcasting signals. Analog signals, measured in intensity, are more easily prone to distortion and take up more space than digital sig-

nals, which consist of concatenations of zeroes and ones. Meanwhile, two American consortia, and another composed of NBC and European companies, developed digital forms of HDTV that were far superior to the Japanese analog system. This year, when the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) sat down to pick a standard for HDTV, it was no contest.

The Japanese can still rebound by manufacturing superior televisions that adhere to the standard developed by American and European researchers, but instead of being ahead of their rivals, they are now at least a year behind.

America's rebound in high technology shows that the Japanese style of long-term economic planning will not necessarily lead to success in high-tech industries based upon constant innovation. In the case of both mainframes and HDTV, the Japanese style of planning locked Japanese companies into what proved to be a losing strategy. But it does not demonstrate the converse of this—that American government and companies are best off maintaining their current *modus operandi*.

In high technology, America is still living off discoveries made decades ago. These discoveries were funded jointly by the Pentagon and by companies like IBM or Xerox that devoted large parts of their budget to disinterested research. The major high-technology companies used to maintain the equivalent of university computer science departments. At its labs, where "fellows" enjoyed lifetime tenure, IBM developed hard drives, RISC processors and Windows operating systems decades before they became commercial products. AT&T's Bell Labs contributed the computer language C and the operating system UNIX. And as Robert Cringely recounts in *Accidental Empires*, researchers at Xerox invented networks, laser printers, graphical interfaces, mice and the personal computer itself.

But the research funds are quickly drying up. The Pentagon is cutting back its research budget. The federal government exercised its antitrust mania on Bell Labs; IBM is cutting its research budget; and Xerox is no longer in the computer business. The new companies such as Microsoft, Intel and Apple tie their own research directly to product development.

In addition, America still can't match Japan's manufacturing capability. As soon as products become standardized commodities, the Japanese take over. As Ferguson and Morris point out in *Computer Wars*, if the FCC had regulated computer operating systems in the same way it regulated fax or TV transmission, then the Japanese would have taken over computers a long time ago.

If American firms cannot learn to manufacture goods cheaply and well, they will not be able to take advantage of their lead in software and design. And if the government doesn't help fund the next generation of computer hackers, then this lead in design will evaporate.

So while there is no cause for the kind of alarm that many felt in the late '80s, there is also no reason for complacency. ◀



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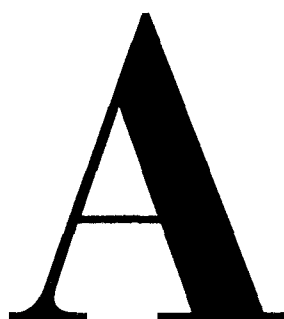
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## R U S S I A

# Yeltsin's rival waits in wings



*Alexander  
Rutskoi helped  
Yeltsin become  
president, but  
their paths  
have diverged  
as Yeltsin has  
courted the  
West.*

By Roy A. Medvedev

Although Boris Yeltsin survived the April 25 referendum, his future as Russia's leader remains unclear. One reason for his success is that no strong rivals have emerged. But Yeltsin's vice president, Alexander Rutskoi, is steadily moving toward center stage in Russia's present constitutional and political crisis. If Yeltsin leaves office before the end of his five-year term, Rutskoi will either replace him automatically or have a greater chance of being elected president than anyone else. And if Yeltsin runs for re-election, Rutskoi is the one most likely to run against him.

If Rutskoi does become head of state, he will certainly change Russia's policies and government. In criticizing Yeltsin, he says that the correctness of a particular reform should be demonstrated to the Russian people, not to the West. He would relegate concepts like "market" and "radical reform" to second place in

the Russian political lexicon and put simple slogans like "national interest" first. Rutskoi, who often calls the Commonwealth of Independent States an Hostility of Independent States, would also attempt to re-establish the Union, even if only as a union of Slav states.

Rutskoi is the first Russian politician to reach the top of the political pyramid without ascending the Communist Party hierarchy and without having been a member of the *nomenklatura*. Unlike Yeltsin, who does not have a political party to support him, Rutskoi organized his own party in 1991—for which he was expelled from the CPSU. Rutskoi's party, originally organized as the Democratic Party of Communists of Russia, is now called the People's Party of Free Russia. Initially it had about 10,000 members, but after the August 1991 coup attempt, in which Rutskoi led the expedition to the Crimea to free Mikhail Gorbachev, he renamed the party and it grew to 50,000 members.

Unlike Yeltsin and Speaker of Parliament Ruslan Khasbulatov, who are surrounded by former Communist Party apparatchiks, Rutskoi's relatively small staff consists mainly of experts and specialists. He attained prominence as vice president of the Russian Federation at a time when the central government of the USSR was still all-powerful. The Russian government, like the other republican governments of the Soviet Union, did not participate in foreign relations, nor even manage its own economy. It was only the disintegration of the USSR, in which he played no role, that made Rutskoi prominent.

Alexander Vladimirovich Rutskoi was born in Kursk in 1947. He chose a military career, became a pilot in 1975 and was sent to Germany, first as squadron commander and then as chief of staff of an air regiment.

In 1985 then Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev decided to end the war in Afghanistan, and Rutskoi was appointed commander of an air assault regiment. He was seriously wounded in late 1986, and when he recovered was made deputy head of a military air college in Lipetsk.

In 1988, however, he volunteered to return to Afghanistan and was appointed deputy air force commander, with the task of covering the withdrawal of Soviet troops. Rutskoi continued to make almost daily combat flights. On one of these flights his plane was shot down and he was taken prisoner. Upon his release, he was made a Hero of the Soviet Union—the nation's highest military honor.

In 1990 Rutskoi graduated from the General Staff Academy and was named head of the air force center in Lipetsk. Although this post was normally filled by a general, Rutskoi remained a colonel. Some people say his promotion was delayed because, in the spring of 1989, he ran for election to the USSR Congress of People's Deputies against Valentin Logunov, editor of the liberal newspaper *Moscow Pravda* and one of Yeltsin's circle. Rutskoi, who at that point still supported orthodox communist policies, won only a few



votes. In the spring of 1990 he again tried to enter politics, this time in his hometown. He unexpectedly was elected to the Congress, scraping by with 51 percent of the vote.

At the first Congress of the People's Deputies of the Russian Federation in May 1990, Yeltsin was nominated for chairman of the Supreme Soviet by the "Democratic bloc." The CP candidate was Ivan Polozkov, the conservative secretary of the Krasnodar regional party committee. Several votes were taken but neither Yeltsin nor Polozkov could muster a majority. In this voting marathon Rutskoi not only consistently voted for Yeltsin but also lobbied the military deputies on his behalf. This was the origin of the "Rutskoi parliamentary fraction." In the close struggle between Yeltsin and Polozkov every vote was vital. Finally, on June 1 Yeltsin won with a majority of four votes. Without the support of Rutskoi's small "Communists for Democracy" fraction of about 100 deputies, Yeltsin would have lost. When the leading bodies of the Congress of People's Deputies of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republics (RSFSR) were elected, Rutskoi became a member of the Presidium of the Soviet of the RSFSR. In the first half of 1991 he was a firm Yeltsin supporter in debates in the Russian Supreme Soviet.

In the spring of 1991 the constitution of the RSFSR was amended to create an executive presidency. The president would be elected by universal popular vote. Yeltsin's strongest opponent in the election was the former prime minister of Russia, Nikolai Ryzhkov, who was supported by the party apparatus and the government of the USSR. Ryzhkov asked Gen. Boris Gromov, former Soviet army commander in Afghanistan, to stand with him as vice president. This would ensure Ryzhkov the support of the 4-million-strong army as well as the vote of the military industrial complex. Yeltsin's obvious choice for vice president was Gennady Burbulis, an old friend from Sverdlovsk and his policy strategist, but he surprised everyone by offering the position to Anatoly Sobchak, the popular mayor of St. Petersburg. When Sobchak unexpectedly refused the offer, Yeltsin consulted the latest public opinion surveys. They indicated that he had little chance of winning the army vote. Nor was he popular in the autonomous republics or in rural areas where the CPSU was still strong. He waited until the last possible moment and then suddenly announced that his vice presidential partner would be Col. Rutskoi. At that time Rutskoi was almost entirely unknown.

Explaining his unexpected choice in campaign speeches, Yeltsin said that he needed a partner who had contacts with past and present army personnel. But Rutskoi also had valuable connections with the CP leadership. It is difficult to assess how much Rutskoi contributed to Yeltsin's election. To win in the first round, candidates had to gain more than 50 percent of the vote; Yeltsin and Rutskoi won with 57 percent of the vote.

As vice president, Rutskoi did not have any particular area of authority. As a military man, however, he considered it his duty to intervene in the crisis in the Chechen Autonomous Republic in the northern Caucasus in Novem-

ber 1991, after a local coup in Grozny, the capital. Insisting that the Chechnya declaration of independence was treason, Rutskoi persuaded Yeltsin to declare a state of emergency and to send in Russian troops. (Since Russia did not have a proper army at that time and the Soviet army would not intervene, Yeltsin was forced to use Internal Ministry troops.) But Gen. Dzhakhar Dudaev raised a national guard of 30,000 people and blockaded Grozny airport. The Russian giant proved powerless against tiny Chechnya. Since it could not crush the revolt, the RSFSR Supreme Soviet repealed Yeltsin's decree and blamed Rutskoi for the affair. There were calls for his resignation.

Yeltsin, however, chose another form of punishment for his excessively patriotic vice president. At the end of November 1991 he made him responsible for general supervision of Russian agriculture and for introducing agrarian reforms—a hopeless task in a field about which he knew nothing. In Russian political circles (and in the Western press), this was seen as an attempt to humiliate him.

But Rutskoi took the job seriously and with great energy set about studying the problems of the countryside. He created a group of agrarian advisers and tirelessly toured the country, examining the situation in various regions. On his initiative, some large state farms were rented free of charge to foreign tenants (Dutch, French, German and others) who imported their own seed, fertilizer and technology and applied their own methods of farming. Rutskoi kept repeating that resolving the food problem in this way made a lot more sense than spending hard currency on imported grain and food. It was an unusual approach with obvious advantages. Previous recourse to imported food had impeded the development of a modern agrarian infrastructure in Russia, whereas Rutskoi's idea would assist the modernization of Russian farming.

In the political struggle that developed at the end of 1992 Rutskoi did not support Yeltsin. Instead, he sided with Civic Union, the centrist political grouping that reflected the views of industrial directors and the technocratic elite who wanted to slow down market reforms. That autumn Yeltsin also charged Rutskoi with leading the struggle against crime, the mafia and corruption. This had become such an acute problem in Russia that in a survey of Russian public opinion at the end of 1992, nearly 25 percent of respondents replied "the mafia" to the question "who rules Russia?"

The complete rupture between Yeltsin and his vice president occurred in March 1993, when Yeltsin attempted to give himself new special powers. After the referendum in April, Yeltsin stripped Rutskoi of virtually all responsibilities. Despite this, Rutskoi has not conducted a covert struggle for power. Nonetheless, without any initiative on his part, power is shifting toward him.

◀  
**Roy A. Medvedev**, born in 1925, was a dissident for many years. More recently he has served as a People's Deputy of the USSR and a member of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. *Let History Judge*, *All Stalin's Men* and *Khrushchev* are among his many books. He is now co-chairman of the Russian Socialist Party of Workers.

# IN PRINT

## Only a test?

By David Futrelle

Several years ago, in desperate search for summer employment of almost any kind, I found myself interviewing for a job processing employee "integrity tests." The interview went, I thought, reasonably well; I seemed to have convinced the interviewer—lying through my teeth—that I was actually interested in the job.

Then I was given the integrity test myself, and I made the fatal error of telling more or less the truth. One of the questions asked what percentage of people I thought stole from work. Like most people, I don't know anyone who *hasn't* stolen from work—pencils and paperclips and such—and so I gave an estimate at what I thought was the low end of plausibility—80 percent or so.

After the test was administered, I was taken to watch the other test processors at work. As it turned out, the stealing question was the only one they really cared about, and the processors were giving negative hiring recommendations to anyone who answered above the impossibly low figures of 5 or 10 percent. Unless you were astonishingly naive, the only way to pass the test, it appeared, was to lie. I didn't get the job.

I'm not, luckily, the only one who considers such tests a dangerous (though in this case vaguely ludicrous) infringement of civil liberties. In his new book *Testing Testing*, F. Allan Hanson delivers a powerful indictment of an America "awash in tests" of dubious validity, of the largely unexamined consequences of an overly examined life.

Looking at all manner of tests—from polygraph and drug tests to SAT exams—Hanson undermines much of the authority of these seemingly objective measures. In many cases, he argues, such tests are an attempt (partially successful) to wrap a punitive disciplinary program, based on uncertain assumptions and improvised methodology, in the sanctified aura of science.

The "integrity tests" are a good case in point. Though millions of such tests are administered every year, they don't

appear to test "integrity," or, in fact, much of anything. According to studies commissioned by the testmakers themselves, only a small percentage of those labeled "dishonest" by the tests (and thus possibly denied even a chance at a job) are actually found engaging in dishonest behavior. Those who score well are likely either to have faked their answers or, as one observer noted, to be blessed both with "a punitive, authoritarian personality" and a strong inclination to look the other way. (One fast-food restaurant owner told Hanson that he had given up using the tests because "the people we were hiring were just *too weird*.")

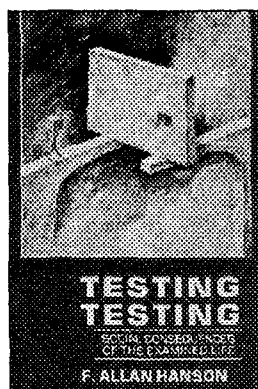
Hanson makes a persuasive case for abolishing all such tests. He is still persuasive, though less so, in his indictment of intelligence and drug tests. Scores on intelligence tests, as many critics have pointed out, correlate so exactly with family income that it's likely they measure educational opportunities more than intelligence—but it's not clear, absent a revolution in the educational system, what could be designed to replace them.

Random drug tests, unlike so many of the other tests Hanson discusses, actually measure what they purport to measure—drugs in the blood. But Hanson is right, I think, in arguing that these tests are an unnecessary and humiliating breach of privacy. He is on shakier ground, though, when he goes on to say that drug testing is less an attempt to ferret out drug use than "a disciplinary drill" designed to condition employees to "automatic docility."

Hanson's book is watched over, as it were, by the spirit of the late French philosopher Michel Foucault, whose eerie disquisitions on the "disciplinary technologies of power" have had such an enormous influence amongst the trendier quarters of academe. Drawing heavily on Foucault, Hanson sees tests less as a means of gathering information than as

"instruments of the evolving system of dominating institutions that act to curtail individual freedom and dignity."

At times, Hanson's reliance on Foucault leads him to undercut his own evidence with gratuitous rhetorical overkill, and his prose is weakest when (like Foucault) he tries his hardest to soar: "The body responds loverlike to the touch, whispering secrets to the polygraph machine in tiny squeezes, twinges, thrills, and nudges. ... The subject as mind, powerless to chaperone the affair, watches helplessly as the carnal entwining of the machines produces its undoing." Luckily there is a minimum of such Foucauldian would-be lyricism in Hanson's book, and much that is genuinely insightful. ◀



**Testing Testing:**  
**Social Consequences**  
**of the Examined Life**  
 By F. Allan Hanson  
 University of  
 California Press  
 378 pp., \$28

# Youth culture vultures

By Liza Featherstone  
and Jennifer Stein

**N**ow that the media has—at long last—begun to tire of the Baby Boomers and their various travails, attention has shifted to a younger generation, those 80 million Americans born between 1961 and 1981. That is, us.

Like most people in our generation, we're as eager as anyone to understand ourselves. So we entertained a brief hope that Neil Howe and Bill Strauss, authors of last year's smart and cheeky *Atlantic Monthly* cover story on what they call the 13th Generation (the 13th generation of Americans since the Founding Fathers, that is, now spanning the ages 11-31), would be able to offer a genuine perspective on who we are and what we stand for, how we have been screwed, and why we should get angry.

In their new book, *13th Gen*, the two do score a few points. They make knowledgeable reference, in Wayne's-Worldly slang, to our music, movies and childhood experiences; you'd almost think that these two Boomers (41 and 45, with families and everything) had grown up with the Bradys, survived divorce and played Space Invaders with the rest of us.

In kind consideration of our generation's video-age attention spans, the two stuff the margins of their book with witty hypertext—quotes from books, articles, movies and music—and allow a character they call "the Crasher" (26-year-old writer Ian Williams) to interrupt their text at various points along the way with clever, cutting rejoinders. In

this intergenerational skirmish, we found ourselves rooting for the Crasher. "If [the Boomers] were so concerned about family values," he quips, "they should have stopped reading *Men Who Love the Women Who Love to Hate Them* in their bedrooms, and come downstairs to play scrabble with us while they had the chance." (Despite his apparent authenticity, however, the Crasher is not a real interloper, but a paid contributor to the book.)

Amid all of *13th Gen*'s excitement, it's easy to mistake Howe and Strauss for sincere, if somewhat preachy, Boomers; they appear to be interested in assessing problems, acknowledging some responsibility for them and acting as youth advocates. But this is a disingenuous pose. They are advancing an agenda of their own, and it sounds a lot like the conservative pseudo-populism of Ross Perot's 1992 campaign.

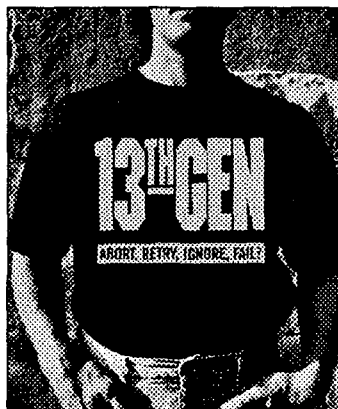
Howe and Strauss' prescriptions for 13ers can be neatly characterized by the "Just Say No" and "Just Do It" T-shirts that a young man is trying to choose between in one of *13th Gen*'s cartoons. What should 13ers Just Say No to? Howe and Strauss encourage us to reject social programs like Social Security and Aid to Families with Dependent Children. In these aims, the authors actually do have some 13er groupies. The much-hyped self-appointed generational spokespeople of

the group Lead or Leave advocate a similar deficit-smashing, budget-cutting agenda.

And what should 13ers Just Do? The authors soberly report that "13ers are cursed with the lowest collective self-esteem of any youth generation in living memory." But paradoxically, they call us the "Just Do It crowd"

and credit us with having a "can-do attitude," as evidenced both by our entrepreneurial spirit and individualism, but also—and here's the kick—in our determination to bravely sacrifice and bear our new austerity. They optimistically assert that "13ers are turning toward leaders who promise to dissolve that system [the welfare state] in favor of the self-starter and self-server." Just Say Perot?

The authors, in effect, want us to do their ideological dirty work for them, to rebel against



## 13th Gen: Abort, Retry, Ignore, Fail?

By Neil Howe and  
William Strauss  
Vintage Books  
228 pp., \$10.00

**Shopping in Space:  
Essays on American  
Blank Generation Fiction**  
By Elizabeth Young and  
Graham Caveney  
Atlantic Monthly  
Press/Serpent's Tail  
288 pp., \$21.00



a hypothetical '60s liberalism they've already rejected. The battle isn't really generational at all: they are simply shining up all the conservative rhetoric of the past 12 years, giving their own weariness with liberalism a certain credibility by casting it in the voice of disaffected youth.

While they acknowledge ours as the most ethnically diverse generation in U.S. history, Howe and Strauss' 13ers—like the “twentysomethings” of media hype, the “slacker” scene and the denizens of Lollapalooza—are specifically white, male, middle-class and college-educated. The complaints of this bunch have less to do with generational outrage than with the presumed loss of middle-class white male entitlement. Why would anyone but middle-class white guys want any part of the 13er rage?

The authors' exchanges with the Crasher are symbolic of their relationship to their 13er audience in general—patronizing, bossy and coercive. When the Crasher disagrees with them on anything, they simply tell him he's wrong; when the Crasher challenges them, they just say “Trust us.” By the end of *13th Gen*, however, the Crasher disputes the authors less and less, and even begins to sound a bit like them.

Howe and Strauss seem to think that those in our generation, having lacked a properly strict upbringing, are now so eager for approval that we're almost begging to be led. Are we really that malleable? Possibly. A glance at recent twentysomething articles shows young people beginning to parrot the prefabricated punditry about themselves, repeating mantras like “we're post-ideological,” “labels are out” and “there is no norm.”

While *13th Gen*'s writers—alienated, conservative, North American men in their 40s—spin sociopolitical theories about us, the authors of *Shopping in Space*, two British literary critics, have chosen contemporary U.S. youth culture as a site for their not-so-innovative poststructuralist projections.

*Shopping in Space* seems to promise lit-crit enthusiasts a fun, campy field trip through the writings of '80s Brat Pack writers Bret Easton Ellis, Tama Janowitz and Jay McInerney, as well as lesser-known figures like Mary Gaitskill, Lynne Tillman and Gary Indiana. Unfortunately, the prejudices and pretensions of British critics Elizabeth Young and Graham Caveney make them unreliable and unwittingly hilarious tour guides.

To their credit, the authors are well-read. The bibliogra-

phy (citing heavyweights on both sides of the Atlantic from Jean Baudrillard to Susan Sontag) reveals copious research and looks like the late-20th-century literature course syllabus of our dreams. But like first-year grad students trying to show off their command of literary theory, Young and Caveney's frantic postulating is often incoherent—at times

bordering on the nonsensical: the Blank Generation writers under discussion are said, for instance, to be “in collective retreat from the more abstruse manifestations of narrative negation.”

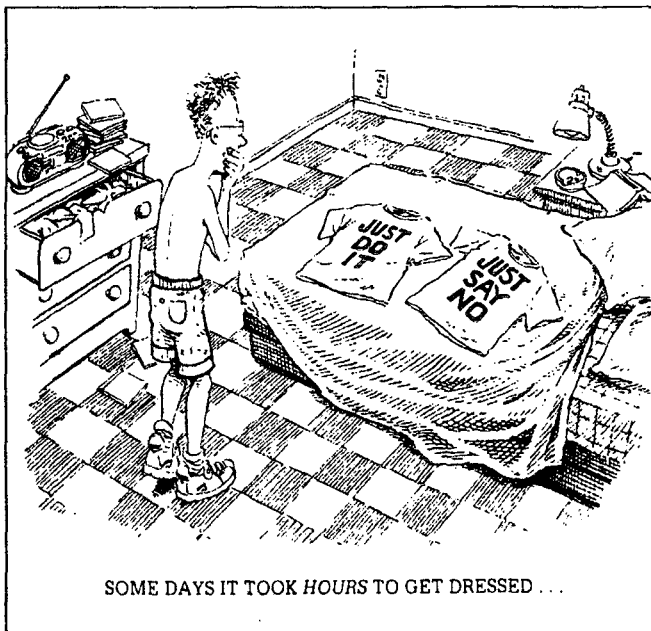
The Brit crits have the most trouble with Blank Generation women, accusing them of selling their sexuality—of being too good looking to be taken seriously. In contrast, “Brat Pack dandy” Michael Chabon is praised for his “fey charm and classic good looks”; and male writers' descriptions of excrement, orifices and violent penetration are seen as fine contributions to “the canon of erotic literature.”

And though Young and Caveney poke fun at the American Blank Generation's perennial search for a “new frontier” or “authentic foreignness,” we find them on a similar quest for danger and exoticism. These erstwhile tourists dizzily map out a United States plagued coast-to-coast with a sense of apocalyptic doom. California's earthquakes create “the notion of trauma and the idea of risk,” creating a world in which “disaster is transformed into spectacle ... hence the litany of snuff movies, gang rape, homosexual prostitution and corpse gazing.” On the other coast, Manhattan's Lower East Side is an “ethnic melting pot boiling over, the menace of anarchy waiting to happen.”

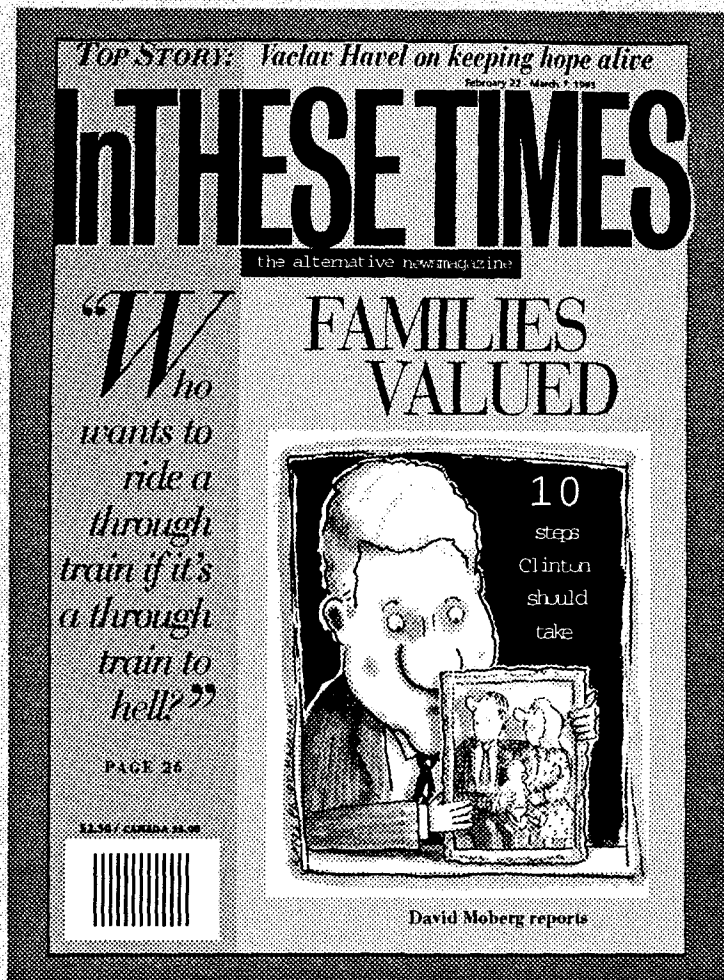
But for all their enthusiasm, these breathless Barthesian backpackers are unable to avoid making obvious and corny pronouncements. On the last page, they conclude that the fiction discussed in *Shopping in Space* “is enough to give one hope that there is indeed a future for literature.” As Lou Reed said (and Caveney and Young smugly quote when dismissing the female “ultravixens” of Blank Generation literati), “Some kinds of love/ are mistaken for vision.”

These two books are just the latest in an ongoing series of attempts to commandeer contemporary American youth culture as a site for old, tired analyses, political and literary. Young and Caveney's British Invasion, while silly, proves relatively harmless compared to Howe and Strauss' siege on the domestic front.

Liza Featherstone is a freelance researcher and writer. Jennifer Stein works at Little, Brown, and Company. Both live in Brooklyn.



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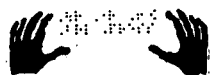
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Continued from page 40

by a couple of tall lattes, jolted by an acrid expresso, my friends and I would surge up and down Telegraph Ave. in search of ... books. From Shakespeare's, we'd jog over to Moe's or perhaps Cody's, working our way through the stores' disheveled collec-

*Slipping on a  
baseball cap is  
more than just a  
rite of spring.  
It's also one  
of passage.*

tions of obscure monographs and cheap detective novels. We'd spend hours leaning against darkened bookcases or sitting hunched over on wooden floors, and when we left, clutching our newfound treasures in dust-stained fingers, we'd swing into a nearby coffee bar for another hit of cappuccino. A vacation that only a fledgling academic could love.

First flights are important, I know, a thought that made me wonder about those baseball caps as reflections of a male child's earliest steps toward self-definition. Enter Oedipus. What does an ancient Hellenic myth have to do with collegiate Greeks? Ask your mother. Especially ask her how, in American culture, many males symbolically loosen their deep attachments to the maternal world and take on the valued objects and rituals of the paternal. I'm betting she'll mention sports as one means by which boys publicly acknowledge this vital emotional transition. Slipping on a baseball cap, then, is more than just a rite of spring; it's also one of passage.

That may be too Freudian, but consider this: few girls of any age in our local softball league, which draws a larger number of participants than

does the boys-only Little League, will don the proffered caps; all the boys wear them. Then there is the matter of our son, Benjamin. When he was three or four he had little interest in sports, participatory or televised, and routinely passed up any opportunity to snuggle with me to take in a game. The *coup de grâce* came one fall afternoon: I patted the couch encouragingly, but rather than watch what he dismissed as "silly football," he toddled over to my wife, Judi, and asked her to read.

Sports aren't silly any longer. Now 12, Benjamin spends hours perfecting his turn-around jumper, works hard tightening his spiral. Stacked on his bookcase are various athletic trophies, beneath which are tacked the primary-colored ribbons earned on the field. And every weekend you'll find him scrunched in the corner of the couch, a pile of *Sports Illustrateds* close to hand. Molded to his head is his favorite 49ers cap. Bill up.

Char Miller is a member of the history department of Trinity University.

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corriente nf. current; flow  
detuvo (detener) v. arrested

herido/a nm/f. injured (person)  
integrista nm/f. reactionary  
por unanimidad 0  
unanimously  
pronunciar un discurso 0  
to deliver a speech  
supuesto/a sf. alleged  
surgir v. to appear  
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## IN THE END

## Hat trick

By Char Miller

**A** *River Runs Through It* isn't really about a river. It's about men in hats. I might have reached a different conclusion had I bothered to rent headphones when the film aired on a recent flight (but I didn't), or had I been able to see the bottom two-thirds of the screen (but I couldn't). All I saw was a series of male heads in snappy fedoras.

That's because my view was blocked by another set of hats, 30 or 40 brightly colored baseball caps, each wedged firmly on the crown of a college boy flying north after a dissolute spring break on South Padre Island in Texas; each cap jutted skyward at a seemingly requisite 45 degrees: fraternity row.

I wanted to create a row, too, until I realized I really didn't care about the movie. So I felt out of place instead, caught as it were between my father's generation that—in the film, as in life—had marked the passage of time by slipping on a seasonal array of stylish hats, and my fellow, if younger, travelers, whose uni-style caps know no season but are nonetheless signs of generational identity.

My hatless condition wasn't the only sign of differing times; the differences were woven into the texture of their avid recounting of beach life. Some of them had, it seemed, spent endless hours cruising dives in Matamoros, Mexico, jamming into overflowing hot tubs and bonging beer (that is, draining a quart or more by means of a funnel and a length of tube). Sound like fun? It did to a passing flight attendant, a recent graduate who lamented she'd been unable to join the festivities. "I hope you partied enough for me," she sighed. "We partied enough for the whole plane," one shot back. Caps bobbed in assent, looking just like mallards.

What, me crabby? OK. I confess I bar-hopped during spring vacations, too, only my brew was coffee, and my mecca, Berkeley. Long before Seattle laid claim to being the doyen of caffeine culture in America, Bay Area coffeehouses were dispensing a rich variety of java, the aroma of which, like a tractor beam, pulled me up the coast from Los Angeles where I went to school. Powered

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